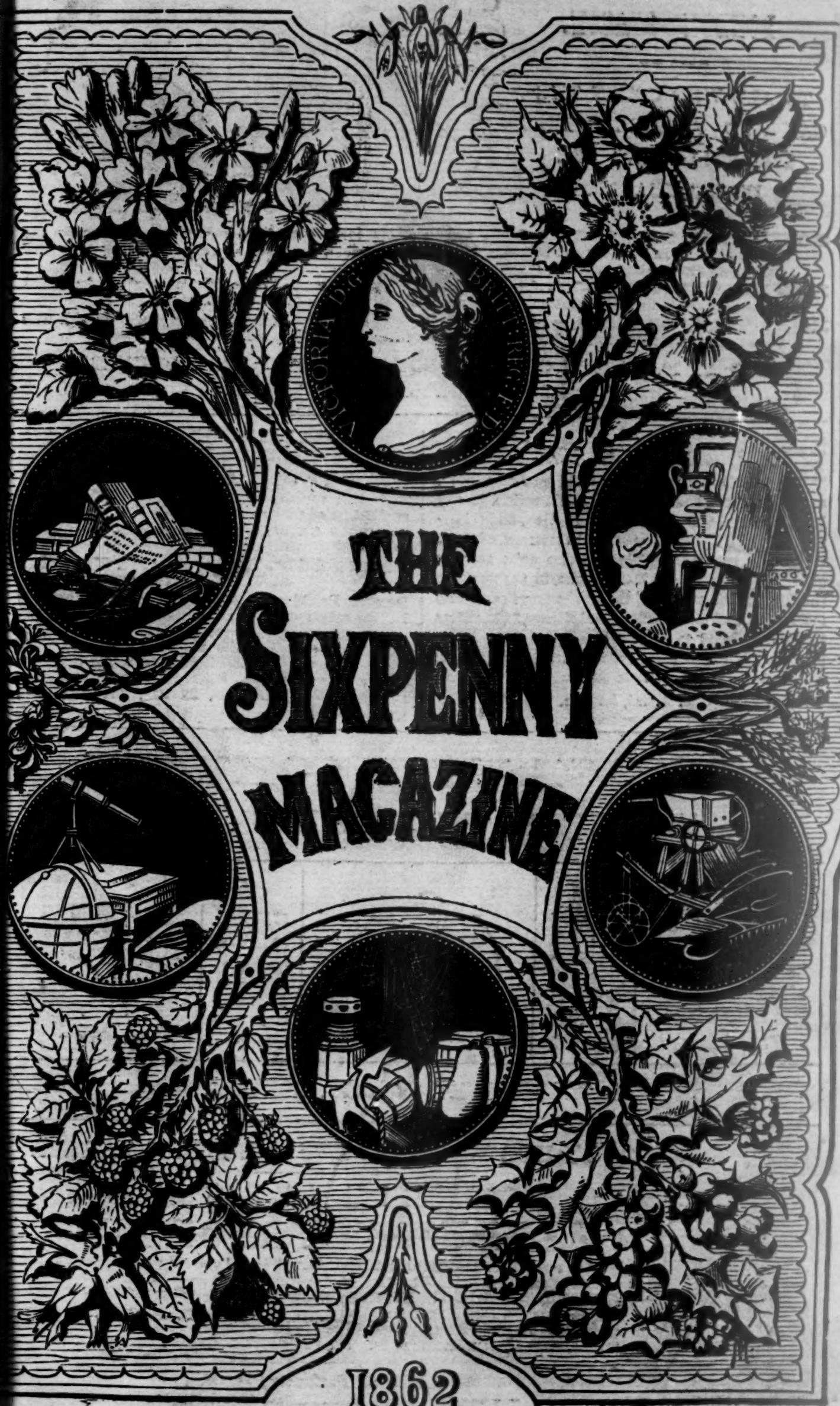


XI.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

MAY.

289



THE
SIXPENNY
MAGAZINE

1862

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THE
SIXPENNY MAGAZINE

MAY 1, 1862.

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THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

IT was said of the Crystal Palace of 1851 that it rose like an exhalation. Before the public had mastered the novel idea, it stood before them realized in all its grandeur, simplicity, and beauty.

The building for the International Exhibition of this year has, however, risen with a rapidity even more startling, considering its comparative extent and solidity. It was only on the 9th of March, 1861, that the laying-out of the ground commenced, and when these pages meet the reader's eye, the building will have been completed, decorated, and filled with industrial products from every corner of the civilized world!

A true idea of the work which has been accomplished could only be afforded by figures and by what is technically called "quantities," and unfortunately, figures, in their higher combinations, do not convey very definite ideas to the unprofessional mind. Few of us realize distances expressed in thousands of feet; and when it becomes a question of bulk or weight, the difficulty is bewilderingly increased. Many of us, for example, will fail to form any correct notion of the dimensions of a building embracing an area of 1,140,000 square feet. However, few can fail to be impressed with a sense of astonishment at the idea of twenty acres of land under one roof, and a very little reflection will convince us of the difficulties which must have attended the raising of that roof within one year.

The stupendous structure which has thus sprung up under the wand of the enchanter, Industry, occupies—as the whole world is by this time pretty well aware—a site a little to the westward of the South Kensington Museum. It may be remembered that the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition of 1851 purchased a large quantity of land out of the surplus funds left in their hands. A portion of it was leased to the Horticultural Society for its new gardens, which were opened with great ceremony last year; and a space of twenty acres remaining on the south of the gardens has been appropriated to this still more attractive object. To a certain extent, indeed, there is an identity of purpose in the appropriation of the whole of the land, for the Exhibition is not only in close proximity to, but in actual connexion with, the Gardens; each is designed to, and no

doubt will, increase the attraction of the other; but at present we may confine our attention strictly to the Exhibition itself. The land available for its construction was found on admeasurement to be of an oblong form, 1200 feet in length by 600 in width. The whole of this it was resolved to take advantage of, and this determined at once both the dimensions and shape of the building. It forms, as nearly as possible, a rectangle of the proportions named.

From past experience there has arisen almost a confusion of ideas in the English mind with regard to exhibitions and glass edifices. It was, therefore, naturally concluded, that when this enormous rectangle had to be covered in for exhibition purposes, the materials used would be simply iron and glass. But experience had shown that these materials, though very attractive when applied to architectural purposes, are in many respects very objectionable. The glass does not offer the necessary protection against the weather; while the amount of light admitted is so great, that it is impossible to regulate it with any satisfactory results. The French had already acted upon this experience in their Palace de l'Industrie, in the Champs Elysées, and had found that though much had to be sacrificed in the way of beauty, very much was gained in comfort and the facilities of exhibition. It was rather a courageous thing for the Commissioners to determine on running counter to the preconceived notions of the public, and abandoning the novelty which had created unbounded admiration in 1851; but the practical advantages were duly weighed, and—though a compromise has been attempted—the edifice before us is essentially a brick-and-mortar, and not a "crystal," specimen of architecture.

One consequence of this is, that the new building is uncompromisingly ugly. Nay, we have the authority of the leading journal for going even further; and asserting this as an *inevitable* consequence! One would have thought that size alone should have resulted in grandeur, and simplicity in something approximating to beauty; but no, this structure has cost 350,000*l.*, and we are assured that "if anything beyond bricks and mortar in their plainest forms had been attempted, it would have cost nearly 1,000,000*l.*" That the exterior "is very ugly no one

denies, or has ever attempted to deny," says our authority; but it was impossible to render it otherwise; and as even architects are limited by the possible, the vindication of Captain Fowke must, we are assured, be taken as complete!

The style adopted may be described in general terms—and perhaps the more general the terms of the description the better—as Italian. The rectangle already described presents (in addition to the garden front) three sides, which are all similar in treatment. The main, or southern front, is in Cromwell-road, the east front is in Exhibition-road, and the west front in Prince Albert-road. The exact length of the main front is stated at 1152 feet; while the height is 60 feet only. This is not a very manageable façade to treat effectively; and when we state that it is disposed in one unbroken straight line, relieved only by the slight projection of the central and flank entrances, much will not be looked for in the way of architectural beauty. The grand entrance certainly serves to give relief to what would otherwise be a monotonous row of circular-headed, unglazed windows, thirty-two in number. By means of it the flat front is divided into two sections. These sections are again subdivided by smaller entrances, consisting of doorways one-third the height of the building, beneath round-headed windows: at each end of the front there are also similar entrances. The two other fronts of the building are similar in design to the south front; but they have the advantage of being surmounted by the enormous domes which give a decided character to these parts of the building, but scarcely aid the effect of the main front. The material used in the construction of these façades is brick; with certain quantities of cement or stucco, adopted for purposes of ornamentation. The number of bricks used is 12,000,000. It may be necessary to add, in order to complete a general idea of the exterior, that from the northern extremity of the fronts in Exhibition-road and Prince Albert-road, there extend what are called the Annexes. The eastern, or Exhibition-road, annexe is 775 feet in length, and has a large open court 350 feet by 100 feet left in it, the covered area being 96,000 feet. The western, or Prince Albert-road, annexe is 955 feet in length: for a length of 720 feet it is 200 feet wide, the remaining 235 feet being 150 feet wide. These buildings,

which partially enclose the Gardens, along the sides of which they run, make no pretensions to external beauty. They are designed to serve hard, practical purposes—the one to hold raw materials, and the other machinery in motion—and the Commissioners have been content that they should have plain lath-and-plaster fronts, with ridge-and-valley roofs.

With this general glance at the external aspect of the Exhibition, let us proceed to enter the building. As we do so, we naturally give another glance at the entrance itself. This has been described, and not inaptly, as a sort of triumphal arch: it consists, in fact, of three lofty arched porches, supported by pilasters, under a cornice—on a level with one carried along the whole front—surmounted by a boldly-conceived and effective frieze. When the flags of all nations float from the summit, the triumphal character of the design will be still further carried out. The height of the entrance is about 120 feet, the width 150 feet. Under each archway there are three compartments for the admission of the public. One grand feature of the entrance has yet to be mentioned. It is the clock which surmounts it, and which is second in size only to that of Westminster. This is manufactured by J. W. Benson, of Ludgate-hill. The dial, which is plain, and may be distinctly read from a considerable distance, is from 15 to 20 feet in diameter. The movement measures at the base 12 feet by 8 feet, and thus covers an area of nearly 100 square feet, by about 25 feet in height. It will chime the quarters on four bells, and strike on a fifth, weighing 45 cwt. No labour has been spared in the construction of this clock, which Mr. Benson has sought to render in every respect worthy of the building it adorns, and of the manufactory from which it proceeds.

The visitor to the Great Exhibition of 1851 will remember that through the main entrance he gained a position in which the grandeur and beauty of the structure burst upon him at the first view. There was the lofty arch of the transept overhead, while the long perspective of the nave stretched away on either side, until it was fairly lost in the aerial distance. In this building nothing of this kind must be looked for. The central entrance occurs where it does, apparently from no particular cause, except that it happens to be the centre. There is nothing in the plan which specially justifies

its being here. The triumphal arch is not the prelude to lofty transept or imposing dome ; we simply pass through a vestibule 150 feet long by 110 feet wide, into a broad passage flanked with courts, having in fact plunged *in medias res*, and come at once into the thick of what are affectedly termed the "exhibits."

This state of things is somewhat bewildering to the visitor who wishes to examine the Exhibition thoroughly and methodically, and therefore we advise every such visitor to arm himself with a ground-plan. Glancing at this, he will perceive that the rectangular piece of land at the disposal of Captain Fowke has been laid out somewhat in this fashion :—The main arteries of the building are the nave and two transepts. The nave, which is 800 feet long and 85 feet wide, forms an unbroken line through the building from east to west ; the transepts, which are about 600 feet in length by 85 feet in width, cross the nave at its extremities at right angles : they, in fact, run from north to south. At the point of intersection rise the two enormous domes, about the policy of erecting which there has been so much controversy. A moment's thought will show that there must be an immense area of space on the northern and southern sides of the nave, and this is devoted to what are called the Glass Courts. But it is a peculiarity of this structure, that the nave is not actually in the middle of it, but greatly to the north of the true centre ; and thus it happens that the courts are much larger and more numerous on the south side—that in which the entering visitor finds himself—being in fact 200 feet wide, while those on the north are only 78 feet wide.

The general arrangement of the building being borne in mind, it may be interesting to note in detail its more striking features. With regard to the nave, we may add that its height is 100 feet, though from the enormous width and length it hardly appears so high. Its general aspect is that of a cathedral of somewhat debased Gothic. This is owing chiefly to the roof, which is of wood coated with felt, and meeting in the centre at an obtuse angle. It rests on timber girders, supported by semicircular arches, also of timber, springing from iron columns 60 feet in height. These columns are placed in pairs—the front ones circular, the rear ones square—at 50 feet intervals. The nave is lit by a row of clerestory windows, round-headed, to assimilate with the rest of the building,

but very simple in form, and filled with white glass. From their position in a row just under the roof, they rather increase its apparent heaviness—a respect in which it contrasts so unfavourably with the nave of the Crystal Palace ; but they are no doubt a very effective mode of lighting the building. The view of the nave which we are endeavouring to afford to the "mind's eye," would not be complete without mention of the galleries which run along on either side at a height of 22 feet, supported by the double pillars, which thence continue to the roof. These galleries are 50 feet in width, one side commanding a view of the nave, the other looking upon the Industrial Courts on the ground-floor. They are protected by very elegant bronze railings, in each compartment of which the rose, shamrock, and thistle are introduced, gilded in relief.

Passing out of the nave at either end, we find ourselves under magnificent domes, larger than any ever yet constructed. They are twelve-sided in form, rise to a height of 200 feet internally, and 250 externally (including the pinnacles), and have a diameter of 160 feet. Some idea of these dimensions may be formed from the fact that the magnificent dome of the new Reading Room at the British Museum is 140 feet in diameter, that of St. Peter's at Rome 139 feet, and that of St. Paul's only 108 feet. In the construction of these marvels of architecture, Captain Fowke has permitted himself to return to iron and glass as materials, and in the raising and bolting together of the huge iron ribs the greatest ingenuity has been displayed. The domes are supported by iron columns two feet in diameter, placed at each angle of an octagon ; but for architectural effect, as well as for carrying the groined ribs, the lower portion of these columns is clustered with two round and one square column of smaller dimensions. By an ingenious arrangement, the twelve-sided dome is made to appear to stand upon an octagon. For the purpose of giving an appearance of greater solidity to the supports of the domes, the columns are built round in brick, and surmounted by decorative plaster capitals. The domes are glazed in narrow slips, and now that the marvellous scaffolding is withdrawn, it is a constant puzzle to the uninitiated how the yards of glass already shivered to atoms are to be replaced. It may be mentioned that beneath these domes the flooring, otherwise on a level throughout

the building, is raised to a height of 16 feet. Here, therefore, we have two vast platforms, surrounded by broad flights of steps.

Of the transepts we need only say that they assimilate in construction to the nave, and, like it, have aisles fifty feet wide running along the sides, and answering to the fifty-feet galleries over them. These aisles both flank the nave and transepts, and surround the oblong spaces devoted to industrial courts, in the midst of which we found ourselves on entering the building, and concerning which we may state these facts:—Those on the south of the nave are 750 feet long by 200 broad; those on the north side of it 750 feet by 87 feet. For the roofing of this portion recourse has again been had to the Crystal Palace style: the roofing of these courts is on the ridge-and-valley system adopted in Hyde Park.

This may be taken as a bird's-eye view of the general arrangement, style, and proportions of the building; but it will not be complete without some allusion to the matter of decoration. This appears to have been one of the chief difficulties of the undertaking. As a matter of art, it was of course a matter of criticism; and everybody sets up as an art-critic in these days. While it was only a question of raising iron shafts and bolting together grooved ribs, the Commissioners were merely assailed by those who had studied the subject on which they talked. But this stage had now passed. It does not require knowledge to adopt theories in art, and ignorance of first principles is rather favourable to talking aesthetics. The way out of the difficulty appeared to lie in experiments, and these soon satisfied Mr. Crace of the correctness of his views. The decision arrived at will, we think, be considered generally satisfactory. The roof has been tinted in distemper colours a light warm grey, over which a simple pattern is distributed, rising from the sides to the apex. The main ribs are decorated in alternate panels of bright red and blue, with a pale neutral margin. The centre of each panel is relieved with a light gilt scroll design. In order to avoid the monotony of unbroken lines of red and blue, the succession of the colours is varied; one rib being painted, for example, blue, red, and blue; and the next, red, blue, and red. The columns are of a pale bronze. The capitals of the round columns are painted alternately blue and red, their mouldings

and ornaments, in high relief, being handsomely gilded. The domes have been very tastefully and yet simply decorated; the chief ornament is of a sun-like character—golden rays streaming down from the apex of the dome, over a ground of neutral tints. The lower portion of these polygonal halls—for such the domes and their supports really form—are adorned with rich, but not garish, designs. Round each dome runs an inscription, in gold on a blue ground. That round the eastern dome is in English, and is taken from the First Book of Chronicles:—

“O LORD, BOTH RICHES AND HONOUR COME OF THEE, AND THOU REIGNEST OVER ALL: AND IN THINE HAND IS POWER AND MIGHT, AND IN THINE HAND IT IS TO MAKE GREAT.”

The inscription round the western dome is in Latin; but it is from the same source, and it may be better to give it in English:

“THINE, O LORD, IS THE GREATNESS, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, AND THE VICTORY, AND THE MAJESTY: FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE HEAVEN AND IN THE EARTH IS THINE; THINE IS THE KINGDOM, O LORD, AND THOU ART EXALTED AS HEAD ABOVE ALL.”

Beneath this, and occupying the four corners—if we may so express it—are the names of the four quarters of the globe. We have yet to mention what may be considered the most important part of the decoration of these halls, and also of the nave. The resemblance of the latter to a cathedral nave is heightened from the fact, that to whichever extremity the eye is directed, it encounters a painted window, in the midst of, and beautifully assimilating with, the rest of the decorations. These large and striking circular traceried lights fill the centre of the eastern and western walls. They are surmounted by inscriptions arranged in a circular form. That on the eastern wall is,

“THE WISE AND THEIR WORKS ARE IN THE HAND OF GOD;”

while that at the western extremity runs in Latin, thus—

“GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEI; ET IN TERRA PAX.”

Of the decorations of the transepts, we need only say that they are similar in style to those of the nave. The semi-circular spaces at their extremities have inscriptions in bold characters. Those in the eastern transept are in English. One is—

“EACH CLIMATE NEEDS WHAT OTHER CLIMES PRODUCE.”

The opposite line is also from Cowper; and if not so striking, is more true—

"ALTERNATELY THE NATIONS LEARN AND TEACH."

The inscriptions in the western transept are in Latin, probably from a sense of difficulty in selecting a living tongue likely to be intelligible to all our foreign friends, without being offensive to any of them. That in the north-west end of the transept is—

"DOMINI EST TERRA ET PLENITUDO EJUS."

At the south-west end we have these words—

"DEUS IN TERRAM RESPEXIT ET IMPLEVIT ILLAM BONIS SUIS."

It may be stated that the garden-end of each transept is filled with stained glass, which has a very rich and imposing effect. Mr. Crace is the artist under whose care the decorations have been executed.

The building thus rapidly sketched is calculated to contain productions from every quarter of the globe very far exceeding in quantity those of the Exhibition of 1851. The dimensions of the building, coupled with the fact that it is crammed in every corner, will afford some little idea of the vastness of the collection. But the number of exhibitors from each country will afford a still better idea. Those of England are stated at between 5000 and 6000; and many send in enormous masses of product, filling entire courts, and thus far exceeding in bulk what individuals of other nations can be expected to contribute. France is represented by 4000 of her most eminent designers and manufacturers; and Austria brings no less than 1400 into the field. The Zollverein will furnish a total of about 3000 in all; and North Germany and the Hanse Towns about 300. Russia is said to be represented by the productions of 600 individuals or firms. The new kingdom of Italy sends over the works of 2000 aspirants; and Rome itself, 46. Then we find that Sweden has 600; Switzerland, 500; the Netherlands, 400; Denmark, 300; and Norway, 200 contributors. With regard to Turkey, it is not easy to estimate the number of exhibitors, because she will show chiefly and extensively through her government. Tunis refuses to exhibit because placed under a Turkish Commission. Greece contributes through 250 of her manufacturers. To this we may add the most

striking item of all—namely, that China and Japan, remote as they are, and isolated as they have hitherto been, now add to the muster-roll 35 names. To the catalogue thus given we have to add American and Colonial exhibitors, and we may fairly assume that they will swell the ranks of the general body to such an extent as to render 20,000 a moderate number at which to place the entire body of exhibitors.

The whole mass of the produce sent in by this industrial army, is, it may be convenient to state here, arranged under three grand sections, including thirty-six classes. The following is the number of exhibitors in each class:—

SECTION I.

	No. of Exhibitors.
Class 1.—Mining, quarrying, metallurgy, and mineral products	380
“ 2.—Chemical substances and products, and pharmaceutical processes	212
“ 3.—Substances used for food, including wines	169
“ 4.—Animal and vegetable substances used in manufactures	281

SECTION II.

“ 5.—Railway plant, including locomotive engines and carriages...	99
“ 6.—Carriages not connected with rail or tram-roads	137
“ 7.—Manufacturing machines and tools	250
“ 8.—Machinery in general	260
“ 9.—Agricultural and horticultural machines and implements.....	143
“ 10.—Civil engineering, architectural, and building contrivances	197
“ 11.—Military engineering, armour and accoutrements, ordnance, and small arms	130
“ 12.—Naval architecture, ships' tackle	157
“ 13.—Philosophical instruments, and processes depending upon their use.....	173
“ 14.—Photography and photographic apparatus	200
“ 15.—Horological instruments	156
“ 16.—Musical instruments	83
“ 17.—Surgical instruments and appliances	157

SECTION III.

“ 18.—Cotton	76
“ 19.—Flax and hemp	89
“ 20.—Silk and velvet	70
“ 21.—Woollen and worsted, including mixed fabrics generally	233
“ 22.—Carpets	48
“ 23.—Wove, spun, felted, and laid fabrics, when shown as specimens of printing or dyeing	54
“ 24.—Tapestry, lace, and embroidery...	83
“ 25.—Skins, fur, feathers, and hair ...	81

	No. of Exhibitors.
Class 26.—Leather, including saddlery and harness	150
„ 27.—Articles of clothing	243
„ 28.—Paper, stationery, printing, and bookbinding.....	251
„ 29.—Educational works and appliances	260
„ 30.—Furniture and upholstery, including paperhangings and papier-mâché	288
„ 31.—Iron and general hardware	469
„ 32.—Steel and cutlery	102
„ 33.—Works in precious metals, and their imitations, and jewellery	93
„ 34.—Glass	81
„ 35.—Pottery	76
„ 36.—Manufactures not included in previous classes	38

In addition to the above, there are the Fine Art classes, extending from 37 to 40 inclusive, and under which 2000 exhibitors are included.

And now let us proceed to take a hasty stroll round the building, pointing out as we go some of the more striking objects exhibited, and their position.

The one advantage attending the main entrance being situated as at present is, that the visitor is furnished with a definite point in arranging in his mind the contents of this building. When we consider that the total space available for the exhibition of articles is 400,000 square feet, and that the number of exhibitors in the Industrial Department is 20,000, and in the Fine Arts Department about 2000, it is natural to ask how it will be possible to find any particular article exhibited? The first step towards it is to bear in mind the broad subdivision of the whole building. As the visitor enters, let him recollect that it is divided in equal proportions between English and Foreign exhibitors, and further, that every inch on his right hand—supposing him to stand in the centre of the central entrance—is devoted to England and her colonies, and every inch on his left hand pertains to Foreign nations. So far as the English half is concerned, we may again roughly subdivide it by saying that the Mother-country occupies the south-side of her half of the nave, and the southern end of the eastern transept; leaving, with some exceptional portions, the north-eastern portion of the nave and the northern half of the eastern transept, to Colonial exhibitors. Subdividing the Foreign half in an equally rough and general manner, we find the southern side of the nave occupied almost exclusively by France, the south end of that transept by several German kingdoms, and the north-

ern end of the transept and side of the nave by Austria, Norway, Sweden, &c.

At first sight a clue to the courts seems to have been furnished by the Commissioners, for the names of the different nations represented in the building are painted on either side of the roof-ribs, both in the nave and transept. But the visitor must not be deceived. He may read "England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales," and so forth, on his right; or "France, Algiers, Prussia, Austria, Russia," on his left; but this arrangement means nothing, the words are there as words, not as any clue to the position of the countries named.

Entering the nave from the central entrance, one is at once struck with the number and beauty of the trophies with which it is adorned. On the English side, there is first, immediately before us, a gigantic clock by Benson; then comes the central fountain, of no great proportions; and then the eye catches sight of a very beautiful artistic object, immediately opposite the archway leading to the Horticultural Gardens. This is the Shakspeare Memorial, the design of Mr. Thomas, the sculptor, who only lived to see it finished and a place secured for it, dying on Wednesday, April 9th, after a very short illness. It is a melancholy thing to gaze upon that figure of the bard, upon those ideals of comedy and tragedy, and on those suggestive bas-reliefs, and to remember that he who conceived and wrought out the whole so anxiously was permitted to approach so near, but never to witness his day of triumph. The Elkington trophy within sight—it is in front of the Elkington Court, first on the right as we came in—is also adorned with sculpture by the same artist—the figures of Boadicea and Bishop Langton. The memorial of the Exhibition of 1851 forms a very conspicuous object. It is only matched by a beautiful obelisk of polished grey granite, 30 feet high, of a novel and beautiful outline. A little further, and we come to two singular trophies—those of Food (class 3), and of Raw Materials. The former is from a design by Messrs. Gilbert; the latter is arranged by Mr. Leighton, F.S.A. The display of rhinoceros' hide and elephants' trunks among articles of food, will probably excite as much surprise as was ever created by the first discovery that there was a nation who ate birds' nests! The substances are, we may add, edible for the same reason—namely, because of the gelatine

which they contain. A trophy in Class 10 follows, and then we have a huge equatorial telescope, by Grubb of Dublin; a huge beacon-light, by Wilkins, follows; then several trophies raised by furriers, who seem determined to assert their claims; then the splendid glass trophy; and so we come to the Bradford trophy, remarkable from the elegant glass dome with which it is surmounted; and the Government arms trophy, flanked by a 110-pounder Armstrong and 100-pounder Whitworth, which will no doubt create immense interest. A large organ, with elegantly decorated pipes, built by Messrs. Forster and Andrews, occupies a conspicuous position in the nave. The marvellously beautiful Norwich gates, by Barnard, Bishop, and Barnard, will attract every one's attention; we may mention also a strikingly elegant drinking-fountain, enriched with different kinds of marble; and even then we shall be far from exhausting the list of this class of production. A general view of the nave naturally suggests a comparison with that of the last Exhibition, and it will, we think, be in favour of the practical character of the present display. There is comparatively little sculpture, and a great deal less of art generally than of industrial and mechanical produce.

The south side of the eastern end of the nave, including a vast open space and its surrounding galleries, will be found of singular interest to Englishmen. Here all the great manufacturing towns are represented. First, we have the Pottery districts, and near them Messrs. Minton have a court to themselves. Then comes the large and handsome Birmingham Court, situate midway between the central avenue and the eastern transept. The sides are occupied by Peyton and Peyton. Messrs. Messenger and Sons, C. J. Phillips, Rennie, Adcock, and other of the principal Birmingham manufacturers, contribute an immense assortment of ornamental and useful objects. In the centre of the court are suspended a number of beautiful chandeliers.

Sheffield has also a noble court in this quarter, in which will be found the names of all the great makers of cutlery and steel goods in the kingdom. The quantity of manufactured goods here is enormous, and in point of variety the articles are perfectly bewildering. To the south of this court is another, one side of which is allotted to the Walsall carriage-builders, and saddlers' ironmongery.

The rest is given up to the Wolverhampton exhibitors of hollow-ware, such as locks, safes, &c.; and Loveridge and Co. and Mr. Perry send a fine collection of japanned goods. The Manchester firms also gather in this neighbourhood, and the familiar names of Whitworth, Fairbairn, and Bessemer arrest the eye.

It is quite impossible that we should mention a tithe of the manufacturers in all branches, who have poured their productions into the building, and combine to shed a lustre around the British name. The mention of a few will at once suggest those necessarily omitted. Among the goldsmiths, for example—the name of Hunt and Roskell occurs in connexion with some exquisite productions: the famous Pakington shield, designed by the son of one member of the firm, and presented to the Right Hon. Sir John Pakington, Bart., M.P., by the county and city of Worcester, is among the objects of interest. Mr. Harry Emmanuel, jeweller, of Brook-street, Hanover-square, contributes some rare gems. A cup cut from a single piece of topaz, and over which the artist, M. Chesnau, has been occupied two years, may be specified. Mr. Hancock of Bruton-street is a contributor of many rare and costly gems. Messrs. Garrard of the Haymarket also take the field with rare and costly objects. They show a silver-gilt cup made for her Majesty, and presented as a birth-day present to the infant Prince of Prussia, her godson and grandson. They also exhibit the collar of the "Order of India," instituted in 1861. Messrs. Smith and Nicholson show a superb service of gold plate, presented to James Allan, of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, which will be greatly admired.

The Ceramic art-products form a very attractive feature. The Messrs. Wedgwood are contributors of many beautiful examples of the ware with which their name has been associated during the past century. Alderman Copeland, M.P., is a large contributor; and from the Worcester Porcelain Works some gems of art will be observed. This department would be incomplete unless the firm of Minton and Co. was represented; and we are pleased to notice a court of objects bearing the familiar stamp, executed with the most exquisite taste. Messrs. Wills Brothers contribute some superb objects in terra cotta as well as in metal. In connexion with this branch of the sub-

ject, we may mention the glass products of Messrs. Pellatt and Co., and may especially particularize the engraved glass, of which they exhibit many choice and remarkable examples. Messrs. Dobson and Pearce, of St. James's-street, contend in friendly rivalry in this department, and their stand should not be passed by without inspection. The name of Defries and Sons is familiar in connexion with glass-work over the known world, and more particularly as chandelier makers. Of this class of production they exhibit one of the most beautiful examples ever fabricated.

In addition to their noble gates at the southern end of the eastern transept, the Colebrookdale Ironworks furnish many superb specimens of their art-product. Messrs. Feetham, of Clifford-street, are great in their ornamental ironwork, also; and they, too, exhibit a pair of iron gates which will attract much attention from their chaste beauty. They are designed and executed for the Earl of Dudley, and will be placed at his seat, Witley Court, Worcestershire. From the Britannia Works, Derby, there are some elegant fountains and other works.

And so we might continue our enumeration for pages.

In the very centre of this south-eastern portion, there is one court which strikingly illustrates the contrast between the state of public feeling in 1851 and 1862. In the first year, people had really begun to entertain the idea of turning the sword into the reaping-hook, in the belief that "the battle-flags were furled" for evermore. Ten short years have passed, and the most attractive court in all this Exhibition will be that devoted to Class 11, comprising military engineering, ordnance, and accoutrements. The court is close to that of Sheffield, and may be discovered at once by the military trophy in front of it. The grand centre object is a most singular trophy of Armstrong's, illustrating the manufacture of his famous gun, from the first rough iron coil to the finished article. It is more than 25 feet in height, and weighs nearly 50 tons. Here, also, we are shown the stages in the manufacture of the Enfield rifle, from the first step upwards. Military arms and implements of every description surround us on all sides; indeed, the collection surpasses anything of the kind ever before seen in this country. It includes models of our national fortifications at Portsmouth, Plymouth, &c., and a model of London, surrounded by the lines of de-

fence which were projected some time since. The engineers, also, send a whole series of models of barracks, hospitals, rolling bridges, suspension bridges, ambulance wagons, sap-shields, ballistic and gun pendulums, and models illustrating the parabolic theory of the flight of projectiles, while the subject of the projectiles themselves will be very finely illustrated. This department is under Major A. Moffatt, and he has carried it out most efficiently.

Of a kindred nature are the contributions under Class 12. This comprises ships of war, as well as commerce, and almost every object pertaining to them. A most valuable series of models, lent by the Admiralty, illustrate the progress of our naval architecture from the days of the "Great Harry," the wonder of 1514, down to our own times. But the object which of all others in this collection will attract most attention, is a model of the ship *Warrior*, contributed by the Thames Iron Works. There is also a model of a new iron-shielded ship.

From the manufacturing quarter of the nave, one is led almost imperceptibly into the southern end of the eastern transept adjoining it. This is entirely devoted to the trophies of the great manufacturers in iron and steel. The first that arrests attention is a rood-screen, together with a corona, for Hereford Cathedral, manufactured by the Skidmore Art Company of Coventry, from a design by Mr. Scott. It is impossible to convey by description any idea of the novelty and beauty of these productions. There are many imposing trophies in this part, and, among others, we may mention Mr. Warner's peal of eight bells, designed to illustrate a new invention by which one man will be able to ring the whole peal. Mr. Bessemer, the inventor of the new process for making steel, has an imposing trophy here, consisting of a handsome carved screen, the outer edge of which is surmounted by a framework of bronze and rail of burnished steel. In this, under glass, will be shown specimens of the Bessemer steel in all the forms of its application—from a crank-shaft in a 50-horse engine, in one piece, and a circular saw, made from one disc of steel, over 7 feet in diameter, with teeth 10 inches in length; down to steel wire the 250th part of an inch in diameter. There is a metropolitan trophy of iron and general hardware, the chief contributors to which are Bailey and Co. and Mark Feetham and Co.,

of Clifford-street, who have beautiful specimens of Renaissance ironwork; while Hart and Sons and Benham and Sons enrich the trophy with mediæval work. Messrs. Naylor and Vickars have a noble trophy of castings in steel and steel bells, said to be very beautiful in tone. Lastly, at the extreme end of the transepts is a superb pair of bronzed iron gates, which, with a statue of Cromwell, 14 feet high, and smaller works, constitute the trophy of the Colebrook Dale Company. It may be mentioned that these are not the only gates in the building, and opinions are divided between their artistic beauty and those of Messrs. Feetham, executed for the Earl of Dudley's seat, Dudley Court, Worcestershire, and a pair by Messrs. Barnard, Bishop, and Barnard. Both the latter are in the nave.

The Americans occupy a small space at this end of the eastern transept. Owing to the distracted state of the country, the contributions will be few in number, and the most important item is not shown here, but in the western annexe. It consists of a power-loom, designed for the production of carpets and other tufted fabrics of great beauty, at a comparatively trifling cost. It has 108 metal catches, which act like the human fingers. A steam fire-engine is another striking item; and there are a variety of small labour-saving implements. Mr. Sargent has samples of a new engine-oil; and illuminating oil from petrolicus from the wells of Pennsylvania and Ohio, warranted non-explosive. California is represented by one article only—Hansbrow's challenge force-pump, of which there is a beautiful silver-mounted specimen.

Running from this court due west, close to the south wall of the building, and extending nearly the whole length of it, is the carriage department; which must not be overlooked. Here is every variety of carriage, from an omnibus to a perambulator; and intermixed are several specimens of improved fire-engines. Among the striking objects, is Shillibeer's improved omnibus. This is called the *vis-à-vis* omnibus; it has separate seats inside, and those on the roof and the box are reached from the interior. Mr. Evans, of Liverpool, has devoted himself to the improvement of that other popular street vehicle, the Hansom cab; and the principal feature is the increased accommodation, two persons being enabled to ride in it with comfort. Mr. Vezey, of Long-acre, sends a carriage with noiseless

springs in india-rubber bearings. Storey, of Nottingham, has a landau, also with noiseless wheels in chain tires. Mr. Mulliner, of Leamington, sends a four-wheeled dog-cart, which opens and forms a wagonette. The novelties in this department are in fact interminable, and would take whole pages to describe.

Re-entering the transept at its extremity, and returning through it northward, we have to ascend the twelve steps which surround the platform, in order to reach the northern portion of the transept. And here are one or two objects which will arrest attention. First, there is the orchestra for 1800 performers, erected for the opening, and which will probably remain a fixture. It is not remarkable for its beauty, and it comes in the way of one of the most strikingly beautiful objects in the collection. It is the enormous porcelain fountain, some 20 feet in diameter, erected by the Messrs. Minton, after a design by the late Mr. Thomas. This fountain is in magolica ware; its design is exceedingly bold and striking, and the figure of St. George and the Dragon, with which it will be surmounted, is particularly spirited and graceful. From its position upon the raised dais, it will, as it throws up a brilliant column of water beneath the overarching dome, be an object not easily forgotten. Suspended from the roof on one side of the dome is the corona already mentioned, and on the other a fine chandelier of 60 burners, by Messrs. Neville.

Let us now descend the steps of the dais into the northern end of the transept. Here we find ourselves in the midst of the colonies—South Australia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Mauritius, Madagascar, Siam, Liberia, Canada, Nova Scotia, Vancouver's Island, Natal, &c. Among these Liberia enjoys the distinction of having been the very first in the field: her consignment of palm and other vegetable oils, dye-woods, and other raw produce arrived first, and formed the nucleus of the whole Exhibition. On the other hand, Madagascar was the last to make application, and to have space allotted to it. King Radama II. has forwarded a very interesting collection of ores, cloths, and native manufactures, and himself presents to the Commissioners a chair of native iron.

The Australian Court will naturally excite great interest. It fills the angle formed by the junction of the transept

with the nave. South Australia contributes a magnificent collection of ores, including one solid block from the Burra-Burra mines weighing seven tons. A piece of malachite of enormous proportions will arrest attention. Hitherto we have associated that product with Russia; but this is said to surpass any specimen which that country has produced. One highly interesting class of article must be noticed; it is generally known that South Australia is looked to as a possible wine-producing country; and here are samples of about forty different growths of native wine. Queensland contributes native products in the form of black marble, sandal-wood, arrowroot, raw silk, wool, pine-apples, citrons, sugar-cane, ginger, sarsaparilla, and Sea Island cottons. Western Australia is more particularly distinguished for its minerals, and sends gold, iron, copper, and lead ores. Pearls and pearl-oysters may here be seen, and our agricultural friends will be delighted with a wheat which is said to yield from 27 to 28 bushels an acre, each bushel weighing nearly 70lbs.

The New South Wales' contributions include some exceedingly beautiful stuffed alpacas. Their graceful forms, and soft, glossy fleeces must command attention. The timber of the colony is well illustrated, and there are many rare and valuable specimens, including the white iron bark, which has been found to bear 11,000 lbs. pressure upon a cubic inch. Among the mineral specimens the various kinds of gold, and the conditions under which it is found, are illustrated by numerous samples in three cases, prepared under the direction of Capt. Ward, R.E.; one of these contains 48 characteristic specimens of the various gold-fields, and there is a nugget from Stony Creek weighing 13 ounces.

Canada exhibits both raw and manufactured articles. From New Brunswick there are some splendid specimens of maple furniture and other polished woods. Models of bridges, and other works denoting the progress of civilization, are numerous. In the Vancouver's Island collection we notice some extremely beautiful stuffed birds, and enormous stags' heads and horns. But the largest collection of horns is furnished by Natal: some very fine skins also enrich this court, including those of the rhinoceros, buffalo, lion, and every kind of goat and antelope to be found in that latitude. The specimens of wood are fine, and are shown in an admi-

rable manner. Each variety is represented by a square pillar, some five feet in height. Its upper half is polished, while the base is left rough; the whole is surrounded by a pretty glass case, containing the leaves and the fruit or berries of the tree. In panels of the higher portion of the pillar charts of the country are framed. An assortment of Kaffir weapons, robes, implements, and utensils will be examined with great interest.

In the Nova Scotia department there are gold bars, quartz, and auriferous sands from the newly-discovered diggings. A single column of coal, 34 feet high, from the great seam at Picton, will create some astonishment. Cotton is a subject of special interest just now, and a few bales from Hayti will perhaps form the most interesting portion of its contributions. Vancouver's Island has voted 1000*l.* toward the expenses of showing off its produce to the best advantage; and the articles sent are of great interest. Among those for which space is provided, is a gigantic pine spar 230 feet high. Jamaica has a fine court, and occupies 600 feet with her natural productions, and manufactures. There is a table here, composed of no less than 65 different kinds of wood, all grown in the country; and samples of rum, sugar, rice, gum, Indian corn, coffee, and cotton are shown. Newfoundland occupies a conspicuous place with her native produce.

Making our way now down the northern side of the English portion of the nave, we find ourselves still to some extent among our colonies and dependencies, though English courts intervene. But it is as we near the centre of the building that the most interesting courts present themselves. A green pagoda-like roof apprises us that we have now reached the Chinese and Japanese portion of these restricted dominions. China sends, among other curiosities, the autograph of the infamous Yeh, as we are accustomed to call him; but Yeh-ngam-fung-t'ien-ta-toa, as he calls himself, which may be translated into these modest terms, "By the Grace of the Lord appointed Heavenly King and Great Chief." There is also the superb wood-carving which formed the back of the Emperor's throne in his palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen; and a great many other rare and curious objects, which savour of judicious "looting." The porcelain, carvings, lacquered ware, and bronze works are very interesting, and there are some rare ornaments in the

familiar jade-stone. The Japanese collection is even more attractive; because the productions of China are in comparison familiar to us. Specimens of the massive quadrangular coins of the Empire are here: there is a display of the famous egg-shell china; marvellous ivory earrings, armour, metal-work, silk, crape, lava from Fusigama, and, greatest marvel of all, a cable of human hair!

This court brings us back to our starting point, the centre of the building, and we have now to explore in the opposite direction, and to take that half of the building devoted to Foreign exhibitors. The first thing which strikes one is the comparative paucity of objects in the nave. But the eye is in fact, chiefly attracted by the façade to the French court, which court is on the south of the nave, and occupies the whole quadrangle from the centre to the transept, including the galleries, about one-fourth of the available space. Apart from its size and position, there is no difficulty whatever in recognising it. The French are not a retiring nation; and having had license granted to them, they have not failed to take advantage of it. In the first place, they have intruded almost into the middle of the nave with a vast structure, in the form of an ornamental façade, which is to form the entrance to their court. It has a lofty central pediment adorned with the Imperial arms; it is surmounted with bold and striking metal scroll-work, and is to be hung with drapery. This erection impedes greatly the view of the nave; but then, it flatters the national vanity of our Gallic friends—and is not that compensation enough? The French court is also entirely enclosed by partitions forty-five feet in height, for which this reason has been suggested: works, however individually important, are great or small according to the area in which they are exhibited, and the French knowing this, have had recourse to an expedient which will secure to their productions full weight and importance, while it ensures them several minor advantages in the way of light and arrangement. Among other features of their court, the French have a fountain, for which the West Middlesex Water Company are to supply water at the rate of 40,000 gallons an hour. Their exhibits are of all kinds, but fine-art products (irrespective of their fine gallery of paintings) abound; and in the application of the fine arts to the necessities of life, they are, as usual, far in advance of

most of their neighbours. France does not, however, confine herself to her *spécialité*, she enters the list with England in raw products and manufactures, though the competition cannot be called favourable to her.

The south of the west transept is chiefly occupied by Prussia, the Zollverein, and the numerous small German principalities, such as Hanover, which, by the way, shows a fine bronze statue by her sculptor Engelhard. Statues abound in this portion of the building, and some very fine works in bronze ornament it at every available point. An exceedingly light and elegant specimen of breech-loading rifled cannon is sent by Prussia, and will attract some attention. Passing over into the northern end of this transept, we come into the domains of Austria, which are very large, but do not seem overburdened with goods. The Austrians have secured the whole centre, which they have divided into three large enclosed courts, the woodwork surrounding them being entirely covered with maroon cloth. Superbly-carved wood furniture constitutes a main feature in these courts. We are here also in the neighbourhood of Russia, who has been so behindhand, that we are unable to say anything of what she has to show, but we hear that among other items there are malachite vases in which a man might swim. Returning by the northern side of the nave, through Denmark, Norway, Sweden, &c., we again reach the central point from which we originally started.

These are the main features which have struck us in passing round the building; but there is one very important part of the Exhibition of which we have not yet spoken, simply because it does not fall within, and would therefore have complicated, our general view. It is the Picture Gallery. To examine this it will be necessary to return to the vestibule of the central entrance. On either side of that are flights of steps leading to the galleries, and on ascending either of these the visitor finds himself in a vestibule, similar to the one below, forming an entrance to the *Picture Gallery, which is enclosed, and runs the whole length of the front of the building. The division into English and Foreign departments is preserved here also, and standing in the vestibule, the visitor sees through a noble archway on his right, the English gallery stretching away to the east, and through a similar archway the Foreign gallery, extending to

the extreme west. These galleries are 50 feet wide and 43 feet high, and at their extremities they expand into rooms, rendered practicable by means of the wing-towers. As it is probable that this portion of the building will be permanent, great care has been taken in its construction. The foundations are carried down to the gravel, from six to twelve feet, and rest on concrete. The floor is of the greatest strength, it is carried on girders $13\frac{1}{2}$ by 12 inches, resting on the side walls, and intermediately supported by two cast-iron columns.

Considering the purpose for which they were to be applied, the utmost attention has been paid to the lighting of these galleries. The light falls from the roof, through a semi-transparent medium, equally distributed, so as to prevent the rays being directly reflected from the surface of the picture to the eye of the spectator. The galleries are almost without decoration, beyond a plain cove extending to each side of the skylight, and resting on a moulded cornice. The walls—which are lined throughout with wood, kept at a short distance from the brickwork, so as to guard against damp—are coloured of a sage green, which does not in any way distract the attention from the pictures. One is not, as in the Louvre and other palace-galleries of France, constantly lured from the quiet works of art by gaudy ceilings or meretricious gilding.

Of the works of art it would be impossible for us to speak; our limits would not suffice for the barest catalogue of them. Enough that here are collected the gems of this and of other countries, the value of the collections being beyond any computation in money. And so vast is the quantity brought together, that it has been necessary to provide two auxiliary galleries, jointly 1200 feet long. These will be found in the galleries of the English and Foreign transepts.

Let us now quit for a few moments the main Exhibition structure, and betake ourselves to what, though architecturally inferior, will probably be regarded by many as among the most interesting portions of the building. We refer to the Annexes. That on the east, 775 feet long, is devoted chiefly to Classes 2, 3, and 4; while the Western Annexe, nearly 1000 feet long, comprises the machinery in motion, which, for obvious reasons, it has been thought advisable to exclude from the main building.

A description of the wonderful collec-

tion in the Eastern Annexe would form a volume of a scientific encyclopædia. It is under the care of Mr. C. W. Quin, F.C.S., and his position has been no sinecure. The chemico-pharmaceutical section alone includes 200 exhibitors, and is very rich in specimens. A complete series of drugs, scientifically arranged by a committee of the most eminent members of the Pharmaceutical Society, assisted by Professor Redwood, is unequalled in interest. The discovery of the coal-tar dyes (Magenta, Mauve, and so forth), is illustrated by Mr. W. H. Perkin; and Mr. R. Rumney, of Manchester, shows the improvements in calico-printing and dyeing since 1851. Messrs. Emery and Co., of Coleridge, Staffordshire, have a collection of mineral colours intended for use on porcelain, including not only every tint, but the most delicate gradations. The Class which includes mining and minerals is particularly fully illustrated. There is an aluminium trophy by Bell of Newcastle, which will include some most elaborate works in the new metal. The Mersey Steel Works show a double-throw crank, weighing 25 tons, made at a single forging. Nearly all the great coal-fields send specimens of their produce, accompanied by models of the best method of ventilating mines, and of machinery used in working them, all of which will repay examination. Among the products of Britain coal certainly takes precedence of gold; but we have also here auriferous quartz from Merionethshire, and gossan from Devon. Class 3 will also be found to occupy a vast space in this Annexe, and thousands of objects included in it claim attention.

The interest of the Western Annexe even exceeds that of the one we have just quitted. The machinery in motion (Classes 5, 7, 8, and 10) is under the superintendence of Mr. D. H. Clarke, C.E., and it includes contributions of that description from various nations, particularly England, France, Belgium, and Prussia. A very brief examination will show that we are quite justified in placing England first in the list. This is the department in which she stands proudly unrivalled. Almost every novelty in locomotives finds a place here; and among other objects which must not be passed over, is Mr. Ramsbottom's simple and ingenious invention for watering tenders of trains at full speed. It consists of a trumpet-shaped tube, which is lowered into sunk troughs of water placed at in-

tervals along the line. The velocity at which the train is going forces the water into the tender-tanks with such power, as to fill them instantaneously. Marine engines are also shown in great variety. Of course, as was to be expected, there is endless machinery in connexion with the weaving and spinning of cotton, alpaca, flax, and other fabrics. The Blackburn firms appear to take the lead in this class of production. In sugar-mills, Messrs. Mirrless and Tait, of Glasgow, exhibit the largest and smallest ever made: the one weighs 140 tons, the latter scarcely more than 5 tons. In hydraulic machinery there are some notable contributions. Messrs. Easton and Amos exhibit a pump of enormous power, and Messrs. Gwyn have a pump which will raise a body of water 10 feet broad by 6 inches thick to a height of 25 feet—forming, in fact, a small Niagara. When we state that 110,000 square feet is occupied by the machinery Classes, we shall, we are sure, be excused from going into details regarding them.

Lastly, re-entering the main building, we come to what the visitor long ere this will have begun to inquire somewhat anxiously after—the Refreshment Department. This occupies a space the whole length of the building, running parallel with the nave, but in rear of the Northern Courts. No less than 75,000 square feet is devoted to the cravings of hunger and thirst in the visitors. The English contractors are Messrs. Morrish and Sanders, and they have commenced their campaign by ordering of Messrs. Copelands 20,000 dinner plates, 20,000 dessert plates, 2000 large dishes, nearly 3000 soup plates, 500 soup tureens, 1000 cover-dishes, 2000 decanters, 20,000 tumblers, 10,000 sherry glasses, 25,000 champagne, hock, and port glasses, 500 finger glasses, 10,000 coffee-cups and saucers, 5000 tea ditto, and a large number of glass and china salt-cellars! In addition to this, Messrs. Elkington furnish 4800 electro-plated forks, 6000 dish and tea-spoons, with a number of metal cruets and miscellaneous articles; and Mr. Rotheram, Sheffield, sends in 7500 table and dessert knives and forks, and 200 pairs of carving-knives and forks. The table-cloths have necessitated an order to Messrs. Cork, Son, and Co., for 4000 yards of linen damask, 2000 yards of unbleached damask for the third-class rooms, 2000 damask napkins, and 20,000 glass-cloths. The tables, supplied by Mr. Glenister, High Wycombe,

are 300 in number, each 6 feet by 4 feet; and 3000 Windsor chairs are required to accommodate persons dining. But this is not all. There is also a French contractor, M. Veillard, who has associated with him Messrs. Polet and Chabot, of the Boulevard des Italiens, Paris; and their arrangements are on an equally startling scale.

In the matter of dining, each visitor will consult his own taste and pocket. There are private dining-rooms, in which he may, if he will, luxuriate in a repast rivalling those of the *Trois Frères*. But, on the other hand, arrangements have been made so that every one may dine well, and at a reasonable cost. In the public rooms dinners are provided of three classes, and at these fixed prices: first class, 5s.; second class, 2s. 6d.; superior third class, 1s. 6d.; third class, 8d. only. These charges are exclusive of wines or spirits, but all except the third class (8d.) include beer. It should be stated that all the ales, both draught and bottled, are supplied by Messrs. Allsop, who have undertaken to deliver 300 butts, each containing 108 gallons, into each contractor's cellar, every week. Messrs. Guinness supply the bottled, and Hoare and Co. the draught stout. Englishmen, therefore, have the satisfaction of knowing that their national beverages will be supplied to them of the best possible qualities.

With this comforting assurance we will take our leave, merely remarking that the arrangements for the opening are quite complete, and will be of a very imposing nature. In the semicircular orchestra under the eastern dome, M. Costa will sway his *bâton* over 400 instrumentalists and 1400 vocalists; but we do not hear a very good account of the trial made of the acoustic properties of the building. The chief features in the programme will be a grand march composed for the occasion by M. Auber, and an inaugural ode written by Mr. Tennyson and set to music by Mr. Sterndale Bennett. Although the occasion will lose much of its possible *éclat* by the absence of her Majesty,—who will be represented by H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord High Chancellor, the Earl of Derby, the Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Palmerston,—it will no doubt be of a singularly grand and imposing character, and will be long remembered by those who will be permitted to assist in it.

THE KING'S PAGE.

CHAPTER VI.

(continued.)

THE love-declaration of Louis was so point blank that Madame de Mailly could not refrain from blushing, and quickly drew back her hand.

"Oh, pardon me, madam," Louis said to her, eagerly. "When I first saw you I felt that I should love you for ever; and when the king ordered me to start, I felt I was going mad. It seemed to me that to go without seeing you, without bearing with me a word of hope, a parting glance, would be the most cruel of all punishments, and hence I came, and not daring to enter by the door, I scaled the window. If I am guilty punish me, but for mercy sake do not repulse me."

Madame de Mailly, though for a moment affected by the hurried beating of her own heart, soon regained that absolute empire over herself which renders woman so strong. Her smile returned, and she said to Louis :

"Do you know that you are mad?"

"Yes," he replied, with an admirable medley of boldness and simplicity, "mad with love."

"What is your age?"

"Eighteen."

"I am nineteen; I am consequently your elder, and must possess more experience than you."

"Ah," Louis said, looking at her with amazement, "that is very possible."

"It is so, sir. Now," the young lady continued, giving him a tender glance, "I know that men always assert they will love eternally."

"Well?"

"And they are as inconstant, my feather-brained gentleman, as fine weather in autumn, butterflies in spring, and the blue ocean in the tropics."

"Oh! I am not so."

"That is what they all say."

"Put my love, my constancy to the proof—you will see."

Louis' attitude was suppliant, his look eloquent, his voice caressing and persuasive. Madame de Mailly almost began repenting that she had not raised an alarm of robbers.

"I love you," he said, in a whisper. "He loves you," a secret voice murmured at the same moment in the ear of the canoness. Her heart palpitated, and she was on the point of replying,

"And I too——"

And then, again, it was midnight, it was May. The fragrant breeze entered by the open window, and the mysterious silence of a summer's night is propitious to the confessions of two young hearts. Madame de Mailly and Louis looked at each other, but said nothing. He was still on his knees, she standing half bent over him. At last she mastered herself.

"You are going into the country, then?" she said.

"Yes, into the country," the page answered.

"For any length of time?"

"I do not know."

"Well," she said, with a heavenly smile, "return as quickly as you can, and then perhaps I may believe you."

Louis uttered a cry of delight, and tried to take her hand again; but she withdrew it, and said,

"If you wish it to be possible for me to believe in your love, and that I should put your constancy to the proof, you must in the first place deserve pardon."

"Am I so guilty, then?"

The canoness pointed to the window.

"Do you think," she said with a smile, "that the Holy Father owes you a cardinal's hat for the fine manner in which you entered my room?"

"That is true," Louis muttered. "What must I do, then, to obtain pardon?"

"Return by the same road at once. Good bye."

Louis was too gallant a gentleman not to obey on the moment: he bowed to the young lady, leaped out of window, and placed his foot on the ladder. Disarmed by his submissiveness, the canoness walked up to him and offered him her hand. Louis raised it to his lips, kissed it ardently, and then—the hand was withdrawn, the window suddenly closed, and the light extinguished. Louis might have fancied that he had been dreaming it all. Father Matthias was waiting at the foot of the ladder.

"Your excellency is in luck's way," he said.

"Why so?" Louis asked, roughly, recalled to reality by the Jew's cautious voice.

"The watch has just passed, but saw nothing. I had prudently removed the ladder."

"Master Matthias," the page said, full of gratitude, "you are a clever fellow."

"Your excellency overwhelms me;" and the page, drawing out his purse, added,

"Here are two pistoles for the ladder, and three for your care and prudence."

Matthias bowed to the ground, and thought that Louis was a prince of the blood, who had love adventures *incognito*.

"May the God of Israel and of Jacob," he muttered, "grant your excellency a long life, and may I retain my customer."

"Thanks for your good wishes, my worthy fellow; but I fear that the second part of your prayer will not be granted."

"Good Heaven!" the letter-out of guitars said in alarm; "have you broken off with the lady?"

"Oh, quite the contrary."



BLOOD FOR BLOOD.

"In that case, let us hope that your excellency will still require my ladder."

"I do not believe it."

And as Matthias regarded him with amazement, Louis continued in the coolest manner,

3

"I fancy that in future I shall enter quietly by the door."

And he went off humming a tune, leaving the Jew stupefied at his serenity.

2

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH POPPY ENLISTS A RECRUIT.

POPPY walked towards the hostelry of the Golden Cross, reflecting profoundly on the metamorphosis in his young master, and astounded at his new adventure.

"If the chevalier," he muttered, "be alive this day three months, he will have a lucky escape. In the way he risks his skin, a man of iron would not stand it. How the deuce will he manage to see the viscount's sister?"

While Poppy was making this reflection, he passed in front of the porch of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The little square was deserted; no belated citizen, no gentleman in search of amorous adventures had thought fit to come here and enjoy the fresh night air, while gazing at the gothic arches and the neighbouring gables of the Louvre.

All at once Poppy's eye, that small round and piercing eye which discovered everything, remarked under the porch a man, motionless as one of those stone statues which the mediaevalists were fond of placing in niches on the exterior walls of cathedrals.

"Oh, oh," said the honest squire to himself, "is that a thief or a lover? As my master is seeking adventures, I will try one on my own account."

And Poppy walked up, but the stranger did not stir or seem to notice him. Poppy went nearer, but the other retained his statuesque immobility.

"Hilloh, my friend!" said Poppy, as he took the last step, "what may you be doing there?"

"What business is that of yours?" the man in the porch asked tranquilly.

"On my word," Poppy said, as he stepped close up to him, "it is no business of mine, still if I can be in any way of use to you—"

Poppy then noticed that the stranger clutched a dagger in his hand, and, as Poppy was a prudent man, he assured himself that his sword sat easily in its sheath. But he continued to approach, till he stood opposite the stranger, whose face a moonbeam lit up.

"Aventurino!" he exclaimed, falling back a step, and struck by a superstitious thought.

A smile, in which despair could be more easily traced than any other feeling, played round the stranger's lips.

"I am not Aventurino," he said.

"In that case," Poppy exclaimed, "you are his ghost."

And Poppy spoke like a man convinced that he had before him the ghost of the reitre whom Louis had sent to the other world a few hours previously.

"I am his brother," the man with the dagger said, in a hollow voice.

These few words produced a marvellous effect on Poppy. He had believed that he saw the spirit of the deceased Aventurino; and superstitious as are all men whose education has been greatly neglected, he had been struck by a feeling of fear; but when he knew that he had to deal, not with a dead but a living man, he recovered his coolness, his reckless courage, and that contempt for ordinary events that constituted his strength. At the same time he understood that it was very lucky he had not positively affirmed to the brother of Aventurino that the latter was dead, for, even admitting that he was aware of the event, it would have supplied a valuable clue to the murderer, and caused a thousand questions.

"Yes," Aventurino's brother continued, while Poppy was making all these reflections, "I bear a strong likeness to my brother, and am not surprised that you took me for him; you knew him, then?"

"I served in the same division with him. I was sergeant in the Royal Navarre, and he a corporal of Vichy, during the wars in the Netherlands."

"Is it long since you saw him?"

"Oh! ten years at least."

The Italian sighed.

"By the way," Poppy asked, simply, "you speak of your brother in a lamentable fashion, and as if he were dead; has any misfortune happened to him?"

"He is indeed dead," the Italian muttered, furiously.

"Dead!"

"Yes, killed, assassinated, run through the body."

"Poor fellow," said Poppy, feigning deep sorrow; "and how did it happen? where? where?"

"Two paces from this spot—at eight o'clock this evening."

"Corpo di Bacco!" the squire said, pitifully, wishing to flatter the Italian by making use of oaths in his maternal tongue. "But who killed him, then?"

"Oh!" the Italian exclaimed, shaking his fist at the sky, and furiously clutching the hilt of his dagger, "if I only knew!"

but I do not know—and I must learn his name at any price—for blood demands blood."

"Confound it," Poppy thought, "this puts the cap on my honoured master's romantic adventures. It is plain that a good love could not decently spring up, unless accompanied by a lively hatred."

And Poppy continued aloud, still feigning the deepest affliction.

"Certainly, that must be discovered, and blood demands blood, we well know it; we will avenge Aventurino."

"You were a friend of his, then?" the Italian said, as he spontaneously held out his hand.

"I should hope so," Poppy continued, imperturbably; "but," he added, "I do not fancy that the proper way to discover the murderer is dreaming in the moonlight, under the porch of an old church."

"Ah!" Pepe (that was the Italian's name) answered, "we Neapolitans, when we have a murder to avenge, are accustomed to enter a church and invoke the Madonna's aid."

"A famous precaution, on my veracity; then you have just left the church?"

"No, it is locked: I mean to remain here till it is opened."

"You will have to wait some time for that."

"I know it: but where would you have me go? I arrived in Paris only this morning; I only know one man in the city, and I carried my brother's corpse to my wretched garret, and I feel frightened by the side of a corpse."

A strange idea shot across Poppy's brain on hearing the last words.

"We are off to-morrow," he said to himself. "If I leave this scoundrel in Paris, he will see Du Vernais; the latter will at once tell him that it was the chevalier who killed Aventurino, and the couple will concoct a nice little revenge, the result of which will be my master's death. The best plan will be to take him with us, and then he will not suspect, at any rate not until we return, that his brother's murderer is the very gentleman he serves."

This reasoning, we say, was not devoid of sense, and Poppy at once made it the basis for the plan of action he resolved to set in execution at once.

"The enemy you have under your hand," he thought, "ceases to be dangerous."

He then turned to Pepe. "Well," he said to him, "come with me; my lodging

is close by, we will share it, and to-morrow draw up our plan for avenging your brother."

"Your name?" the Italian asked, full of gratitude.

"I am called Poppy, and am for the present squire to the Chevalier de Chastenay, a young gentleman who stands on good credit at court, and who perhaps will be of great service to us in this matter."

"I accept, Mr. Poppy."

The squire took the Italian by the arm, and led him to the hostelry of the Golden Cross, where he had a bottle of old Burgundy served in the drinking room.

"Now then," he said, as he sat down opposite to Pepe, "let us talk."

"I am listening to you, Mr. Poppy."

Poppy assumed the attitude of a man of importance, put his elbows on the table, and after emptying his glass, said—

"Do you know whether the man who killed Aventurino is a gentleman or not?"

"Gentleman," the Italian answered.

"Hang it all! that makes it serious."

"Why so?"

"Because you cannot avenge yourself on a gentleman the same way as on a common fellow."

As sole answer Pepe showed the sharp point of his dagger. But Poppy shrugged his shoulders.

"Nonsense!" he said; "blood for blood, and life for life, that is a very poor revenge."

"What do you mean?"

"We can find something better than that."

"Yes, that is true," the Italian answered; "I will seek for it."

"Now," Poppy continued, whose reasoning was close, "this is exactly a case in which a protector is required."

"I shall have one."

"Who is he?"

"The Chevalier du Vernais."

Poppy started, but he overcame his emotion at once, and asked carelessly,

"Who is this chevalier?"

"A man who stands well at court."

"What next?"

"He is said to be a friend of the superintendent."

"Of Monsieur Fouquet?"

"Precisely."

"How do you know him?"

"I do not know him myself, but Aventurino knew him."

"Ah!" said Poppy.

"The chevalier owed his life to him."

"Oh, oh!" Poppy thought, "I fancy my memory is returning, and that I am about to recollect the place where I saw the chevalier."

And he continued carelessly, "Well, that is strange."

"It is at least ten years ago—it took place in Flanders—perhaps you were present?"

"Go on," said Poppy, listening with all his ears.

"The chevalier, Aventurino told me, had been insulted and humiliated by Turenne, the commander-in-chief, and determined to have his revenge."

"Ah!" said Poppy again, whose memory was returning.

"He therefore resolved," Pepe continued, "to pass over to the enemy with important despatches which Turenne had entrusted to him for the general of another division; and, when he set out, instead of proceeding along the road to Valenciennes, where the division was encamped, he turned to the left in the direction of Mons, where the Duke of Alba was stationed. Unfortunately for him, when about two leagues from camp, he met two soldiers, a horseman and an infantryman. Both scented the chevalier's treachery, and the reitre, who was no other than my brother, broke his arm with a pistol shot, and pulled him off his horse."

"You are a traitor," Aventurino said to him, "and I could take you to Marshal Turenne, who would have you hanged; but it is always a pity to hang an officer, and I will save you. My comrade and myself will keep the secret, and you can say that you fell into a Spanish ambuscade, from which we saved you with difficulty."

"And to give greater probability to the story, Aventurino killed the fugitive's horse with another pistol shot, and led him back to the camp a-foot. Now, the proof of the fact that my brother and the foot-soldier did keep the secret is, that the chevalier was not hung, and remained an officer."

"That is true," said Poppy; "but are you quite sure that the deserter's name was Chevalier du Vernais? for I, who happen to be the foot-soldier who accompanied Aventurino, remember perfectly well that the gentleman called himself M. de la Morlière."

"What! it was you?" said the Italian.

"Myself, and, like Aventurino, I thought it a pity to hang an officer."

"Well," Pepe said, who was fully in-

formed, "M. de Morlière was heir to his uncle, the Chevalier du Vernais, who left him his estate and his name."

"Duce take it," Poppy thought, "that is first-rate; instead of one enemy, my young master has two." And he added, aloud, "Well, what do you intend doing?"

"I will go and find the chevalier, and ask him to aid my revenge, by reminding him of my brother's discretion."

"Nonsense," said Poppy, with a laugh; "do you believe in gratitude?"

"If he refuse, I will threaten to reveal all."

Poppy shrugged his shoulders.

"It took place ten years ago, and there was other proof beyond my testimony: the chevalier will have you taken off to the Bastille, and Aventurino will not be avenged."

The Italian bit his lips and assumed a ferocious attitude.

"What is to be done?" he muttered.

"Listen to me," Poppy said, confidentially. "I am in the service of a gentleman who enjoys great credit; I will present you to him; if you please him, he may possibly do a great deal for you. In the meanwhile, come with me. You shall lie down in my bed, and sleep a little, for you are quite knocked up."

The Italian followed Poppy, who led him to the apartments he occupied with Louis. They consisted of two rooms, one large, the other small; the first being occupied by the chevalier, while Poppy slept in the other. It was into the latter that he introduced Pepe, who threw himself on the bed, and speedily fell asleep. Poppy remained in the front room, after closing the door of communication, and complimented himself in the following terms—

"Poppy, my boy, you did a clever trick in meeting Pepe and bringing him here. When you have an enemy, it is better to give him your bed, and have him under your eye, than to keep him at a distance. Next, and at the same stroke, you learned who the Chevalier du Vernais was, and will remember it when the right moment arrives."

Steps echoing on the stairs disturbed the squire's soliloquy; these steps stopped at the door, which opened, and Louis entered.

"Oh!" the young man, who was radiant, said gaily, "I have finished my day in a wonderful manner."

Poppy laid a finger on his lips. "Silence!" he said, and he pointed to the

door of the second room, whence the Italian's sonorous gasps were audible.

"Who the deuce is in there?" Louis asked, in surprise.

The snoring suddenly stopped. Poppy continued to keep his finger on his lips, and Louis stood motionless with surprise.

The Italian had waked with a start on hearing voices. Then he experienced a strange sensation, and Louis' voice, though he had never heard it before, made him feel one of those strange and inexplicable emotions which affect us at the sight of a man to whom some myste-



PEPE'S EYES ARE OPENED.

rious link attaches us. Then he listened, impelled by a vague instinct of curiosity; but the voices were silent. In the darkness Pepe detected a ray of light filtering through the rickety partition, and crawled like a serpent up to the chink, to which he set his eye. He had seen Poppy lay his finger on his lips, and the young gentleman ask by signs the explanation of this mystery.

And, on seeing Louis, the strange sensation Pepe had experienced on hearing his voice was only augmented. Then the crafty Italian returned to bed, and began snoring once more; but he did not sleep—he listened. Poppy, on hearing his solo performance begin again, could no longer leave Louis in uncertainty; and he said to him in a low voice:

"Two yards from you a man is lying

on my bed, who, if he knew you, would plunge his dagger into your heart."

The page started.

"Who is the fellow?" he asked.

"He is an Italian."

"I know no Italians."

"He is Aventurino's brother."

"What then?"

"You killed that man, and his brother means to avenge him."

At these words, Pepe thrust his hand under his pillow, and pulled out his dagger.

"It is very lucky, therefore," Poppy continued, "that he does not know you."

And Poppy narrated how he had met Pepe, his conversation with him, what he had learned about Du Vernais, and lastly, the inspiration he had had to bring the Italian home with him.

"Now," he said, "he is there, two yards from us, asleep. Let us see what we had better do. Such an enemy, sir, is more dangerous than a dozen gentlemen; for he does not fight, but assassinates. Now, it is better to kill the wolf than be killed by it; and I have a strong inclination to send our sleeper into the other world by a good sword-thrust in the throat."

"Fie!" Louis muttered.

"In that case," Poppy went on, "we must take him with us. I do not know where we are going, but I suppose there will be blows to give and to receive. A bandit like Pepe is of use on expeditions of this nature. Why should we not take him with us?"

"All right," Louis answered.

Poppy opened his doublet, and showed the chevalier the glistening barrels of two pistols.

"In two hours," he said, "when we are about starting, I will propose to him to follow us; if he refuses, I will blow out his brains."

"I can see no objection to that," the page remarked.

"If he follow us—well, we will settle what is best to be done at a later date; and we shall find some honest way of getting rid of him."

"Stay," Louis asked, "has he a horse?"

"No; but the landlord has one which he wanted to sell me, saddled and bridled. An officer who ran in debt here, left it in payment of his score."

"Well, go and wake the landlord; buy the horse, have ours fed, and return at three o'clock precisely. It is now one o'clock, so I have two hours for sleep."

And while Poppy obeyed, Louis threw himself on the bed; and soon fell into that deep sleep of youth against which even love is powerless.

This was the moment that Pepe awaited. He leaped from his bed, glided up to the door with his dagger in his hand, and was about to open it. But an infernal idea occurred to him.

"Oh," he thought, "Poppy was right. Blood for blood—that is a poor revenge; I had better wait. I shall find something better than that."

A diabolical scowl played round the reitre's lip, and he returned to bed, still clutching the handle of his dagger. Two hours later, Poppy came to wake him. Pepe pretended to rub his eyes.

"Hilloa, my friend," the squire said, "my master and I are off; we are going to Angers to prepare apartments for his majesty the king. I expect that the murderer of Aventurino will follow the court to that town, and, if you will take my advice, you will go with us."

And, while saying this, Poppy had thrust his hand into his doublet, and was quite prepared to blow out the reitre's brains in the case of refusal. But the Italian answered joyfully:

"I will follow you most gladly, for I must have my revenge."

A few minutes later, the page, Poppy, and Pepe were in the saddle, and rode to St. Michael's bridge. After emerging from the city, Louis ordered his two companions to go along the Rue d'Enfer, while he rode along the street of St. James, so as not to excite the curiosity of the populace.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH POPPY SETS HIS MOUSETRAP.

WHEN Louis reached St. James's Gate and had passed beyond the walls of Paris, he saw a horseman standing across the road. It was the Viscount M. de Mailly, who was alone; he had considered it unnecessary to bring a lacquey, as he was uncertain where he was going, or the mission he was about to carry out. At the same time Poppy and the reitre reached the place of meeting.

The two gentlemen shook hands, ranged their horses side by side to push far enough ahead to be able to converse without fear of being overheard.

Louis then told him in a few words and a low voice who Pepe was, and how Poppy had thought it prudent to remove him

from Paris. But, at the same time, he thought it as well to be silent about his nocturnal visit to the Place Royale and his growing love for the Canoness, and he merely described succinctly the other events of the evening.

"So that," the viscount said to him, "my aunt owes her life to you?"

"Pooh!" Louis said, courteously, "I am still her debtor."

And turning the conversation, he said—

"Now, I can tell you where we are going."

"Well, where is it?"

"First to Angers."

"And afterwards?"

"Possibly to Nantes. That will depend on circumstances."

"Very good. Will you also tell me what those circumstances are?"

"Not yet. The king does not wish it."

The answer admitted of no reply.

"Still," Louis added, "we need not be in any hurry. We will travel by short stages, drinking freely, as it is so hot, and if you have no objection, we will ride on in the morning and evening and sleep during the day."

Louis reasoned so sagely that the viscount could offer no observation, and matters were arranged as proposed. The four horsemen, dressed very simply, rode at a foot pace, halted at midday, breakfasted at nine, got into their saddles again at sunset, and rode till midnight. On the morrow and following days, they behaved in a similar way.

At Angers, which town they reached on the sixth day, Louis paid a visit to the governor of the province, M. de la Vauguyon, who was a nobleman devoted to the king.

"Sir," he said to him, as he handed him Colbert's letter, "do you recognise that seal and handwriting?"

The governor bowed.

"It may possibly happen," the page continued, "that I may require your services within a few days."

"I am at your orders, sir."

"In that case I will send you my squire, whose name is Poppy, and you will place twenty men under his orders."

"Very good, sir."

"Or, again, it may happen that I arrive here myself at nightfall with a prisoner, for whom I shall require decent but perfectly secure lodgings."

"I have in the castle of Angers," the governor answered, "a tower which an army could not take by storm."

"That is very lucky for you, sir."

"I beg your pardon," M. de la Vauguyon said, not understanding.

"Yes, sir," Louis added, completing his thought, "for it is probable that were the prisoner to escape, the king would offer you lodgings in the Bastille."

And he took leave of the governor with a bow.

While Louis was with the governor, Poppy, according to orders he had received, read Pepe the following lesson:—

"My good fellow," he said to him, "we expected at first to stop at Angers, but my master has a fancy to see the country, and we are going to make a little tour. The chevalier is somewhat quarrelsome, and I cannot answer but what we may have to exchange pistol bullets and thrusts on the very first day."

"That suits me," the reitre answered, laconically.

"In that case," Poppy continued, "you will be paid accordingly, and it will only depend on yourself to earn twenty pistoles honestly."

"They will be earned, Mr. Poppy," said the Italian, pretending the most ardent covetousness.

The same evening the party started again and rode six leagues before drawing bridle. Poppy, with his fox-like perspicacity, had come to the conclusion that some arrest was about to be made, though he was as yet ignorant who the victim might be.

Louis stopped by choice to breakfast or sleep at roadside hostellries and rarely entered towns or villages. The nearer they drew to the Breton frontier, our travellers noticed small buildings recently erected, exactly three leagues apart. They were postal stations, which the superintendent, who frequently proceeded to Brittany, had organized for his private service. An hostelry was always attached to these stations.

Louis never omitted to drink a glass of wine at them, and inquire with the simplicity of a country gentleman who wishes to improve his mind by travelling, about the princely manner in which M. Fouquet travelled. The landlord, delighted by the honour thus done him, gave the most wonderful details, and our hero soon discovered that M. Fouquet had a truly royal manner of posting, in which his brother the Abbé imitated him. A courier preceded him by a day, and ordered the relays to be prepared. A second courier was only four hours ahead of him. Lastly,

the superintendent's carriage, drawn by six horses, arrived with the speed of an arrow, changed horses in three minutes, and continued its route, leaving a cloud of dust behind it.

M. l'Abbé Fouquet travelled in the same manner, the only difference being that he had four horses instead of six. These details were supplied at about three leagues from the Breton frontier, in a small village called Ingrande. The spot greatly pleased the page, and he asked the landlord whether he could accommodate him and his companions. The host, delighted, put his entire hostelry at the service of his guests.

"What is the nearest Breton town?" Louis asked.

"Ancenis," the landlord replied.

"Stay, has not M. Fouquet a hunting-lodge there?"

"Yes, sir."

"What a pity," the page said simply, "what a pity that I do not know either M. Fouquet or his steward."

And he went on, still addressing the landlord:

"I have been told wonders about M. Fouquet's chateau; I should very much like to visit it."

"Oh," said mine host, "nothing is easier!"

"Indeed!"

"The steward comes here every other day on horseback, and he will be highly honoured at receiving a visit from your excellencies. But you have heard exaggerated reports about the chateau; it is only a simple hunting-lodge, which the superintendent never occupies. He stops there now and then when going to Belle Isle."

"Ah," Louis said carelessly.

"And though he does not care for sporting," the landlord continued, "he keeps up there a great number of huntsmen and whippers-in."

"Ah," Louis said again, and he bowed politely to the host, and proceeded to take possession of the apartments which had been prepared for him. The hostelry was spacious: at the moment no one else was stopping at it, and our travellers were consequently very comfortably billeted. The viscount and Louis occupied two adjoining rooms on the first-floor, while Pepe and Poppy were put in possession of a double-bedded room on the second-floor. Poppy, who slightly distrusted the Italian, was not sorry to have him within arm's length.

Up to this time the page had thought it unnecessary to communicate his plan to the viscount and Poppy, but he now thought that the right moment had arrived; and after a copious breakfast, at which Pepe had drunk more than usual, he sent the latter to look after the horses, and proposed to his other companions to take a midday nap under the shade of a clump of oaks growing about one hundred yards from the hostelry.

The page judiciously considered that walls have nearly always ears.

The viscount and Poppy followed—leant their backs against a tree as he did, and he then said to the former—

"Do you not think the scenery about here delightful, and the air remarkably pure?"

"It is so," said M. de Mailly.

"The hostelry is decent, the wine is good, and the landlord polite and attentive. What do you say to spending a few days here?"

"On my word," the viscount answered, "you are the leader of the expedition, my dear Louis, and all we have to do is to obey. Still, I am beginning to guess—"

"Nonsense! what do you guess?"

"That an arrest has to be made."

"I guessed that a long time ago," Poppy said with a wink.

"I, too," the viscount added; "though I am still ignorant who it is we are going to arrest."

"Oh, as for me, I suspect it."

"Indeed, Master Poppy?" Louis said with a frown; "the king does not like his secrets to be guessed."

The viscount regarded Louis tenderly; he was inspirited by this adventurous lad, who doubted nothing, and spoke with the coolness of an old captain.

"I will help you, Louis," he said, "even if we had to arrest M. Fouquet himself. I am attached to the superintendent; but you are the bearer of the king's orders and I am a gentleman."

Louis looked him in the face. He saw that his secret was read; but he knew at the same time that the viscount was honour itself, and that he had nothing to fear from such a confidant. As for Poppy, he was all ears.

"Arrest the superintendent," he said, "at the gates of Ancenis, almost on his own estate? Are you aware, sir, that the superintendent never travels without an army?"

"And pray, master Poppy," Louis

asked, "have you read Grecian history?"

"I never read," said Poppy, not considering it necessary to give the reason why.

"Well, my good fellow," the page added, "the Persians were ten thousand strong, and Leonidas conquered them at Thermopylæ with three hundred."

"The answer is as mad as it is heroic," the viscount remarked.

"Well, my dear fellow, you know that the true sage is a madman, and he alone succeeds."

And with this glorious paradox, Louis turned again to Poppy.

"My good fellow," he said to him, "it seems that the superintendent has a very decent number of huntsmen at his little castle near Ancenis. I am burning with desire to visit the castle, but I do not know the steward. You will therefore be good enough to mount your horse tomorrow at daybreak, and go and ask his permission."

"Very good," said Poppy; "I will go and look about me."

"At the same time," Louis continued, "I will send Pepe to Angers. He will kill a horse, if necessary, and return by night."

"Why send him to Angers?" the viscount asked.

"To deliver a note to the governor."

And Louis took from his pocket some small tablets, tore out a leaf, and wrote on it in pencil the following lines:—

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—You must remember your little cousin, Louis de Chastenay, who paid you a visit two days ago, and requested your assistance. He has run into debt through losing his money in dicing, and is awaiting at the hostelry of Ingrande what you promised him."

And Louis signed his name.

The morrow at daybreak Poppy started for Amiens and Pepe for Angers. Louis then said to the viscount:

"Until they return, we have positively nothing to do; after that, we will hold a council of war. In the meantime, let us have a jolly dinner."

"Very good," the viscount answered, carelessly.

"My dear friend," Louis added, "I have now to ask your pardon."

"Pardon for what, if you please?"

"For having dragged you into an enterprise in which you have positively nothing to gain."

"Nonsense," the viscount said, with a melancholy air; "I was growing tired of life, and this will rouse me up."

And he fell again into that deep reverie which was habitual to him, and the cause of which the page had never dared to ask, though he suspected that it resulted from a severe love disappointment.

During this while, Poppy had been proceeding at a canter, and reached M. Fouquet's hunting-lodge. This castle, of which no vestige now remains, was built at the end of a small valley, surrounded by large woods full of game, and it was about two leagues distant from the market-town of Ancenis. Of recent construction, it had neither the gloomy aspect of old feudal manors, nor the bold architecture of edifices belonging to the Renaissance. It was a species of Italian villa, surrounded by a green lawn, through which ran a clear and brawling stream, and overlooking the prettiest landscape that can well be imagined.

"On my word," Poppy muttered, as he rapped at the park-gate, "that is a castle which would hardly stand a siege, and I could take it single-handed."

A footman in plain clothing opened the gate to the squire, who was dressed like the servant of a good family, and bowed to him respectfully. The footman gave a start of surprise, and a cry escaped from him:

"What," he said, "is it you, Poppy?"

"Why, by Jupiter!" the squire said, in delight, "it is my old comrade in arms, Barnabas!"

"Himself, sergeant."

"And what the deuce are you doing here? I suppose you have left the service?"

"A year ago, sergeant; and I entered as huntsman the establishment of the superintendent. But it is my turn, Mr. Poppy, to ask what you are doing here?"

"I," the old soldier answered simply, "did the same as you. I was getting close on fifty years of age, the harness seemed heavy to my back, and I looked out for a situation. Still, I have not been so lucky as you; for, instead of entering the service of a great lord, like the superintendent, I became the lacquey of a little gentleman of Blois, who has not more than 10,000 livres a year."

"That's little enough," the huntsman said, disdainfully.

"Now," Poppy continued, "my young master is on his travels, for he wishes to see the country and improve his mind.

He proposes to ride through Brittany, as he has already done with Anjou, and we arrived yesterday at Ingrande. There we heard that Monsieur Fouquet had a house in the vicinity of Ancenis, and the Chevalier de Chastenay—that's my master's name—curious, like all lords, for he is hardly eighteen, had a fancy to visit it, as he had heard so many wonderful stories about M. Fouquet's numerous residences."

The huntsman smiled.

"Nothing is more easy," he said, "though there is not much to see here, and your master should have accompanied you."

"Oh!" said Poppy, "the chevalier is rather timid, and he sent me to ask the steward's permission."

"The steward started this morning for Belle Isle," the huntsman remarked.

"Is the superintendent there?" the squire asked simply.

"Why, no," Barnaby replied, "as the garrison is here."

"Will he come soon?"

"He will not come, sergeant, or if he does, it will not be for a good month, as the apartments are not prepared."

This answer upset Poppy's ideas.

"I fancied," he said, "that the steward had gone to Belle Isle to wait for monseigneur there."

"Indeed, no," said Barnabas, who did not seem distinguished by discretion, "we only expect his brother."

"Only his brother!" Poppy said to himself; "it is but a very small exploit to arrest the Abbé Fouquet; stopping a priest on the high road!—there's a pretty job for a gentleman like my master. How do you know that the abbé is coming?" he added aloud.

"Oh!" Barnaby replied, "an express arrived from Paris last night at full gallop, and brought a letter to the steward. As you slept at Ingrande, you must have seen the messenger pass."

"On my word," said Poppy, "that is very possible, but I went to bed at nine o'clock, and when a fellow is asleep he hears nothing."

Poppy said to himself at the same time—

"If that express had passed through Ingrande, I should have known it. He turned off the high road, so the abbé must be on his guard."

Then, aloud—

"In that case, my dear Barnaby, the abbé will pass by here?"

"Oh, of course."

"Will he stop here?"

"Probably; still I know nothing about his movements."

Poppy, who, while thinking, had dismounted and was following the valet, assumed a mysterious and confidential tone.

"My old friend," he said, "do you remember a certain sabre cut I parried at the moment it was about to fall on your head?"

"Of course, Mr. Poppy, and I have always felt deeply grateful to you for it."

"Well, perhaps you will be able to prove your gratitude."

"I? In that case speak, Mr. Poppy."

The old soldier's face expanded into a simple smile.

"I cannot keep up the falsehood any longer," he said; "my master had another object in wishing to visit the house."

The huntsman gazed at Poppy curiously.

"The chevalier," the ex-sergeant continued, "got scent of the superintendent's approaching arrival, and came to Ingrande in the hope of coming across him. He wishes to ask of him a favour to which he attaches the greatest importance. He wants to obtain his protection in the matter of a trial which will come off at Blois within a fortnight, and the loss of which would ruin him."

"Mr. Poppy, I cannot tell you the exact moment when monseigneur will arrive here, but most assuredly his brother will be here in a few days, and he has great influence with the superintendent."

"But how is the abbé to be seen?"

"That is easy; let your master stay at Ingrande till he arrive; his courier will pass through on the previous evening."

"By Jupiter!" said Poppy, "that is a good idea, and we will profit by it."

"And now," the huntsman added, "if you like to visit the kennels and saddle-rooms, come with me; that is all there is to be seen here."

Poppy followed Barnabas, who complacently showed him everything, from the kennels to the rooms, in which there were numerous piles of arms.

"Bless me!" said Poppy, "why, this is a regular arsenal; there are muskets just as in a camp."

"Those muskets belong to monseigneur's people."

"Are they so numerous as that?"

"We are about three hundred strong."

"Why, the lodge is a regular barracks."

"Nearly so."

"The deuce. And what do you do here the year through?"

"We hunt daily."

"In the absence of monseigneur?"

"Yes, of course."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards," the huntsman said, curling his moustache with a martial air, "we drill."

"Oh, oh! for what object?"

"Ah!" said Barnaby, with a wink; "it seems that monseigneur has an after-thought."

"What is it?"

"He wishes to obtain from the king a guard of honour?"

"The deuce! but only princes of the blood have a right to that."

"Stuff! Monseigneur is richer than all the princes in the world; he wishes to have a guard and he will have it. Now, since he has had this idea, he only takes into his service old soldiers, well-tried men for the most part, and pays them well, and it is the abbé who recruits them."

Poppy listened in amazement.

"By the way, sergeant," Barnabas said, confidentially, "you would do well to enter the service."

"Well," the squire said, simply, "it is the opportunity that makes the thief. If the conditions were good, I might think about it."

"Good pay, a handsome uniform."

"Nonsense; you don't mean to say you have an uniform?"

"Not yet, but we soon shall. It even appears that we shall put it on upon the day when the abbé passes on his way to Belle Isle, and that we shall accompany him on horseback."

"Well," thought Poppy, who was beginning to attach greater importance to his master's enterprise, "an escort of three hundred men is not a bad idea, and if the superintendent's brother arrives here without obstacle, my honoured master may safely give up his little plan of arresting him."

Then Poppy continued—

"I suppose you will return here from Belle Isle."

"I do not think so; we shall remain there."

"What to do?"

"To keep garrison, confound it."

"Garrison? then it is a fortress and not a country house?"

"Both: people say that Monseigneur wishes to have it converted into an independent principality, and as cannon and

muskets will do his object no harm, they are collected there."

"Ah!" Poppy muttered to himself, "I am beginning to perceive that the king had a good inspiration in desiring to arrest the Abbé Fouquet, for an abbé like that is worth a general at least."

While conversing, they went over the chateau and its dependencies. Everywhere they met valets in a huntsman's garb, but they were all graybeards, wore long moustaches, and had a very military look beneath their inoffensive livery. Poppy thought it unnecessary to question Barnabas further.

"My good friend," he said to him, after accepting a glass of wine and breaking a crust, "my master is a young gentleman in search of employment, and if the superintendent were to offer him an epaulette in his guards, I fancy that he would very willingly accept it."

"Well, we will see. Good-bye, for the present."

And Barnaby respectfully held the stirrup for the ex-sergeant, who squeezed his hand and started at full speed, so anxious was he to get away from M. Fouquet's body-guard. Poppy dashed like an arrow along the road from the pretended hunting-lodge to Ingrande, and covered in two hours the seven or eight leagues that separated them.

He arrived at twilight, and found Louis conversing with the viscount in the doorway of the hostelry; all then went off to the clump of oaks.

"Well?" the page asked him.

"Only this," Poppy muttered, "we have run our heads into a nice business; we shall be lucky if we get them out again all right."

And he told all that he had seen and heard. Louis listened without interruption, and then said—

"Unless the Governor of Brittany has an army on foot to help us, it is evident that the Abbé Fouquet, if he arrive safely at Ancenis, will go quietly to Belle Isle, where he will shut himself up with his garrison. Once there, he will parley with the match in his hand, and the superintendent will have nothing to fear at Paris in the event of his disgrace."

"I am much of the same opinion," said the viscount.

"It is therefore absolutely necessary," Louis continued, "that he should be arrested here, that his papers should fall into our hands, and that they should prove of a sufficiently compromising nature to

allow the superintendent to be put on his trial ; the Anjou soldiers will be here to-morrow."

"And suppose the abbé pass to-night?"

"Stuff," said Poppy ; "does not a courier always precede him by four-and-twenty hours?"

Louis appeared thoughtful.

"One of two things must happen," he at length said : "either the Abbé Fouquet has left Paris without the slightest fear, and is therefore travelling with some thirty mounted lacqueys—riffraff, whom a few bold men can easily rout ; or else he set out as a fugitive, and will pass *incognito*, and hasten to reach Ancenis, where he knows that he will be safe from any surprise."

"That is true," the viscount remarked.

"And in the latter event," Poppy asked, "who tells you that he will pass through Ingrande? did the express of last night do so?"

While uttering these words, Poppy smote his forehead like a man whose brain a marvellous inspiration has flashed across.

"You, gentlemen," he said, "are too young to remember the Fronde, but if you did, I would remind you how the Cardinal de Mazarin left Paris when he was much alarmed about his personal safety."

"I have heard the circumstances," said the viscount, "but no longer remember them."

"They were as follow," Poppy gravely continued :—"The cardinal announced his departure several days beforehand. One night, there was a great confusion in the Palais Royal, his eminence's coaches were brought out, the wheels were greased, the postilions cracked their whips, and all Paris knew that the cardinal would set out at daybreak. At midnight, however, a courier started to prepare the relays and announce his eminence's speedy arrival. Now, this courier was no other than the cardinal himself. As for the coach, which was stopped at the city gates, it merely contained a captain of the guards, who bowed courteously to the insurgents and informed them that his eminence had a start of six hours and twenty leagues of his coaches."

The viscount and Louis looked at each other.

"What are we to conclude from that?" the latter asked.

"A very simple thing," Poppy replied ; "a Superintendent of Finances cannot be

arrested without very serious reasons. Those motives are, up to the present, wanting, and M. Fouquet will remain very quietly in Paris. But his brother can be arrested under some pretext, and an excuse can be made if nothing is found on him. Now, if the abbé is the bearer of dangerous papers and orders, it is very certain he will have taken his precautions, and be in a hurry to reach the Breton frontier ; in that case, how do you know that he may not imitate the cardinal's example?"

"If that were the case," Louis said, "the abbé might easily be lodged ere long in the Castle of Angers."

"And who tells you," Poppy observed, "that we shall see the courier pass? Did we see the express who reached Ancenis last night?"

"The deuce!" the viscount murmured ; "that singularly complicates the situation. The express avoided Ingrande ; hence there must be a more direct road, which doubtless avoids Angers, and leaves it on the left."

"Not at all," Poppy answered ; "but I fought a campaign in Brittany, and, if my memory serves me, two leagues from here there is a cross country road, which saves at least an hour's riding in going to Ancenis."

"Is there at the junction of the two roads any house, hostelry, or spot where it would be possible to hide oneself?"

"Nothing of the sort, except an old hollow tree, whose cavity could, if necessary, shelter two persons."

Louis joyfully clapped his hands.

"In that case," he said, "we have caught the abbé."

"I beg your pardon," said the sceptical Poppy.

"My good fellow," the page continued, "it is not such comfortable sleeping in a hollow tree as in a bed. Still you will have to put up with that lodging till fresh orders."

"I understand, sir."

"Ah, you understand?"

"Of course. I will go and hide myself there and pass the night ; by day I will conceal myself in an adjoining thicket. If a rider passes, I will put a bullet into his horse and dismount him."

"That is the proper way to talk."

"You," Poppy continued, suddenly assuming all the importance of a general who is arranging an ambuscade, "will remain here with the viscount and await the arrival of the troops."

"And supposing the courier is not the abbé?"

"I shall be all right, for I know him by sight. I have only seen him twice in my life, but that is enough, I would recognise him among a thousand. If the courier is not the abbé, I will shout, 'Your money or your life,' and he will only need to go afoot to the first post-house, which is the one where we now are."

Poppy had an answer for everything. Louis and the viscount bowed, and it was agreed that they should act as he proposed. In the evening, Poppy started for his new domicile. He furtively quitted the Ingrande hostelry, and went across

country on foot, and with a musket on his shoulder, like a man starting to shoot a hare.

But the old soldier had served too long in the infantry not to have iron muscles; he ran like a stag, and covered the three leagues that separated him from the hollow oak in less than an hour and a half. When he reached the cross roads, night had set in. It was one of those obscure and calm summer nights, on which the slightest remote sound was perceptible to the least practised ear. The monotonous sound of the grasshopper alone disturbed the silence, and the country was deserted.

(To be continued.)

ANIMAL LIFE IN THE OCEAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

BIVALVES.

In addition to the great number of Bivalves which burrow in the sand or mud, in stone or in wood, there are many others which live on the bed of the sea, where they usually lead a gregarious life, collected in large banks. As, on opening their shells, they have no reason to apprehend suffocation by earthy matters, like the former, their mantle-folds are more or less divided from each other, so that the circumambient water has immediate access to their finely laminated gills.

The majority of them are fastened to foreign bodies, either by the shell or by the aid of the byssus or beard, a fibrous mass which is spun out from the foot. The Pecten, which lives on rocks, can contrive to move very quickly without feet, by opening and closing its shells rapidly, and the File or Rasp-shell (*Lime*) a variety specially found in the Indian ocean, flies in this way so rapidly through the water, that Quoy and Gaymard, though light-footed Frenchmen, were obliged to run in order to catch it.

The structure giving very limited locomotive power to the Bivalves, necessarily prevents them falling on their prey, and they are therefore satisfied with what the sea washes up to them. Fortunately, salt water is so enormously rich in microscopic creatures, that their modest appe-

titie is fully satisfied in this way. The currents, which reach the lungs either through the open shells or the respiratory tubes, also carry the necessary aliment matter to their mouths.

On the other hand, the Bivalves are exposed to a grand army of enemies. Strand-birds, Asteroids, Fish, Crabs, Sea Slugs, and Annelids swallow them by myriads; and man eats nearly every variety. In vain does the Seafinger (*Pholas ducylus*) burrow in the hard rock, or the Cockle hide itself in the sand; their primæval security was gone, so soon as man once discovered their flavour. The former was considered by the ancients a great dainty; and the latter is even frequently preferred to the Oyster. So much is certain, that during late years it has saved many inhabitants of the Shetland and Orkney Islands from starvation.

Among the best Shell Fish may be counted the Razors, which are famous eating when roasted; the Venus cancellata or Clovis, a favourite esculent of the Provençals; and the Gapers, which are devoured not only by the Greenlanders, but also by the Walrus and the Arctic Fox.

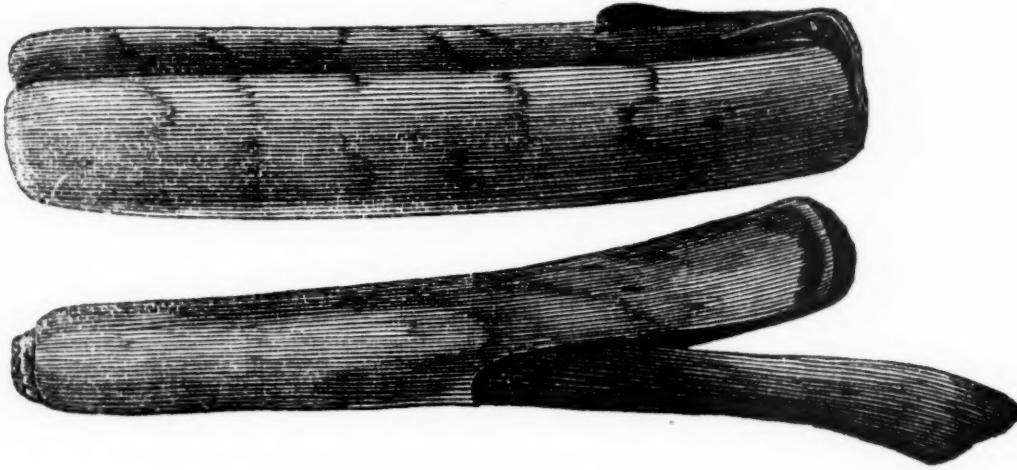
The gregarious common Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*), which is met with on nearly all stony coasts, in the littoral zone extending between ebb and flood, is eaten by myriads. It supplies a very cheap and pleasant article of food; but it is not

very digestible, and at times is poisonous, which, according to Durandeau, may be ascribed to the Asteroid eggs, on which the Mussel feeds in the summer months.

In the north, the common Mussel is also used as bait for Cod, Haddocks, Halibuts, Rays, and other large fish, which are caught with a line. In the Frith of Forth alone, thirty to forty millions are employed annually for this purpose, and in many places they are kept in mussel gardens or enclosed patches of the beach, whose bottoms are covered with stones, to which they attach themselves by their beards.

The artificial breeding of mussels was introduced into France so early as 1235,

by Walton, an Irishman. Having been wrecked on the Bay of Aisguillon, and forced to support life on marine birds, he soon noticed that the mussels, which attached themselves to the posts, by the aid of which he spread his nets over the swamps, surpassed in size and flavour those growing naturally in the slime, and improving his discovery, he established the first Bouchot, or Mussel-garden, formed of posts and plaited oziers. His example found imitators: and, curiously enough, the method employed by Walton six centuries back is still in vogue. We can form an idea of the enormous value which might be derived from the numerous utterly neglected lagunes on many



RAZOR SHELLS.

parts of the coast, when we learn that, although the fishermen of l'Aisguillon sell three hundred pounds weight of Mussels for the low price of five francs, they annually carry to market enough of these molluscs to produce from 40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.*

The praise given to the Oyster by Pliny the elder, who called it "Mensarum palam et gloriam," is still enthusiastically repeated by countless admirers. It is Queen of all the Molluscs. It is well known, leads a gregarious life, and forms large banks, principally on rocky soil; though it is also found on sand, or even in slime. In the tropics, it frequently attaches itself to the roots and branches of the Mangrove trees that grow at the edge of the water, and at ebb tide they are seen oscillating in the air. The Oyster is an inhabitant of all European seas up to the high north, where it finds its limit at Bestenfiord (68° N.L.), but the British waters must be regarded as their principal habitat, as they are found nowhere else so numerous and so good. Even the Normans preferred the Oysters of Canthium to those of the Lucrine Lake, Brin-

disi or Abydos. The coasts of Brittany and Normandy are also renowned for their celebrated Oysters.

In spite of their high price, which limits their enjoyment almost to the tables of the rich, enormous quantities of Oysters are devoured. During the season of 1848-1849, 130,000 bushels were sold in London; and, in 1853, Paris consumed a quantity representing the value of 1,641,359 francs. In 1828, the French banks in the channel supplied fifty-two millions, and we read in Mylne Edwards, that in 1817, the little seaport of Grandville kept seventy-two boats incessantly employed in the Oyster fishery from October to April.

In trade there are three varieties of Oysters:

1. Those which are dragged from the deeper beds by an iron dredger, and caught in nets. These are the largest, but least estimated.

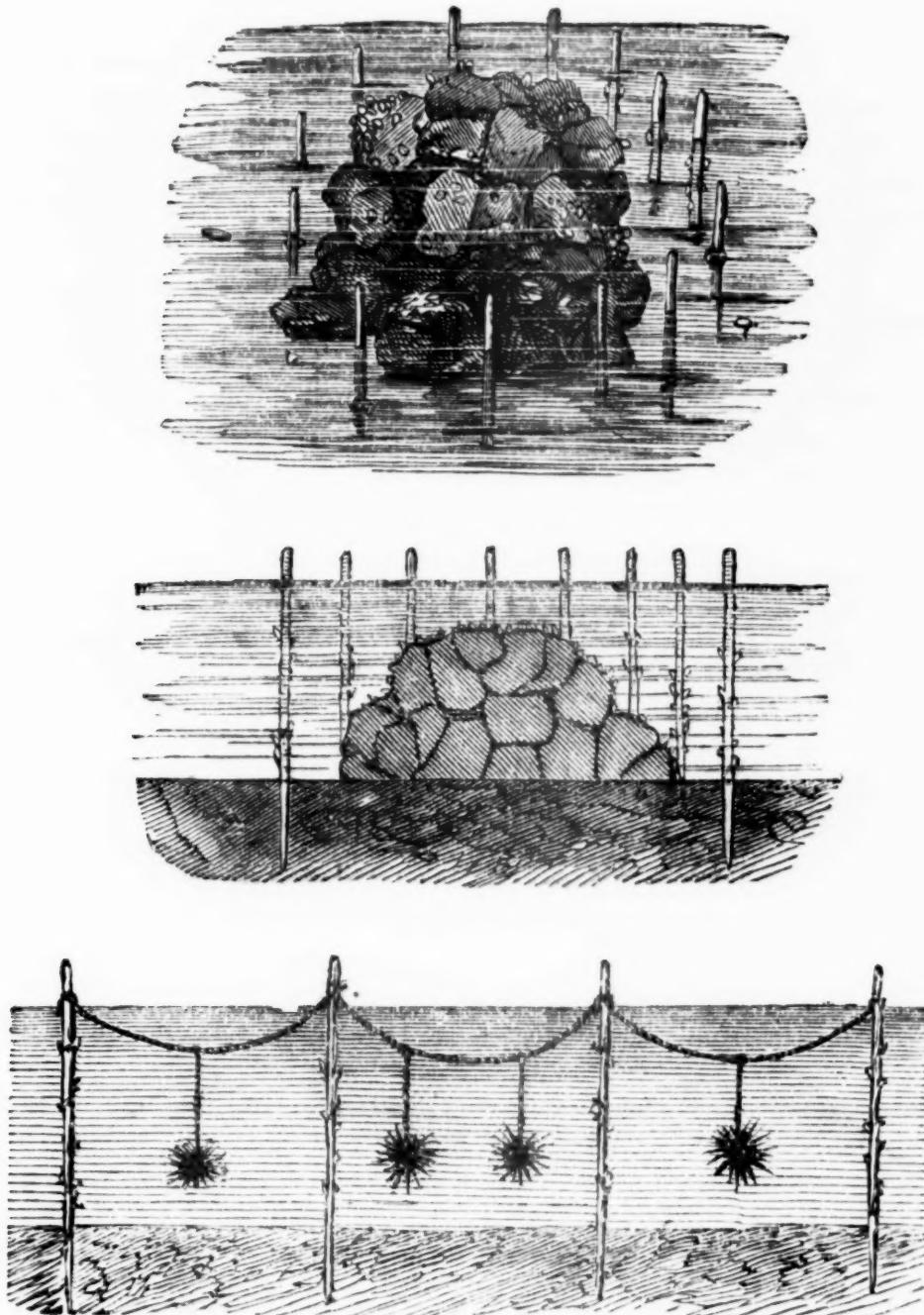
2. Those collected on the banks which rise higher from the water, and are nearer the coast. As these animals are exposed to the daily change of ebb and flood, and frequently remain dry, they have the

habit of retaining the water in their shells for a lengthened period, and hence can be sent for greater distances than the former, which soon expel their water and pine away. Those are preferred which are collected on a clean soil, and at the mouth of rivers.

3. Those Oysters which are kept in artificial tanks or parks. This trade was known to the Romans; and Pliny men-

tions the Knight Sergius Orata, who lived in the time of the orator Lucius Crassus, as the first who laid such an Oyster nursery in the Lucrine Lake, and gained enormous wealth from it.

The modern Oyster breeding is specially carried on at Harwich, Colchester, and many other English coastal towns; at Marennes, Havre, Dieppe, Treport, &c.; and Ostend has gained a well-merited



THE ITALIAN OYSTER BREEDING-FRAME.

reputation not only through its sea-baths, but also through the excellence of its Bivalves, which in winter are sent even as far as Warsaw. In Ostend, the Oyster-beds, which are seven in number, consist of large basins lined with masonry, and connected with the sea by means of gates. As the salt water can remain for a longer period in these basins, a larger number of infusoria is developed in it, so that the Oysters find here more abundant food than in the free

element, and grow very plump. At the same time, the greatest care is taken of their health, and they are laid separately, lest they might disturb each other. In this manner they are nursed and improved by art, and far surpass the raw children of nature, which, not having enjoyed the advantages of a well-regulated physical training, are carried straight from their submarine homes to market, and handed over to the murderous steel.

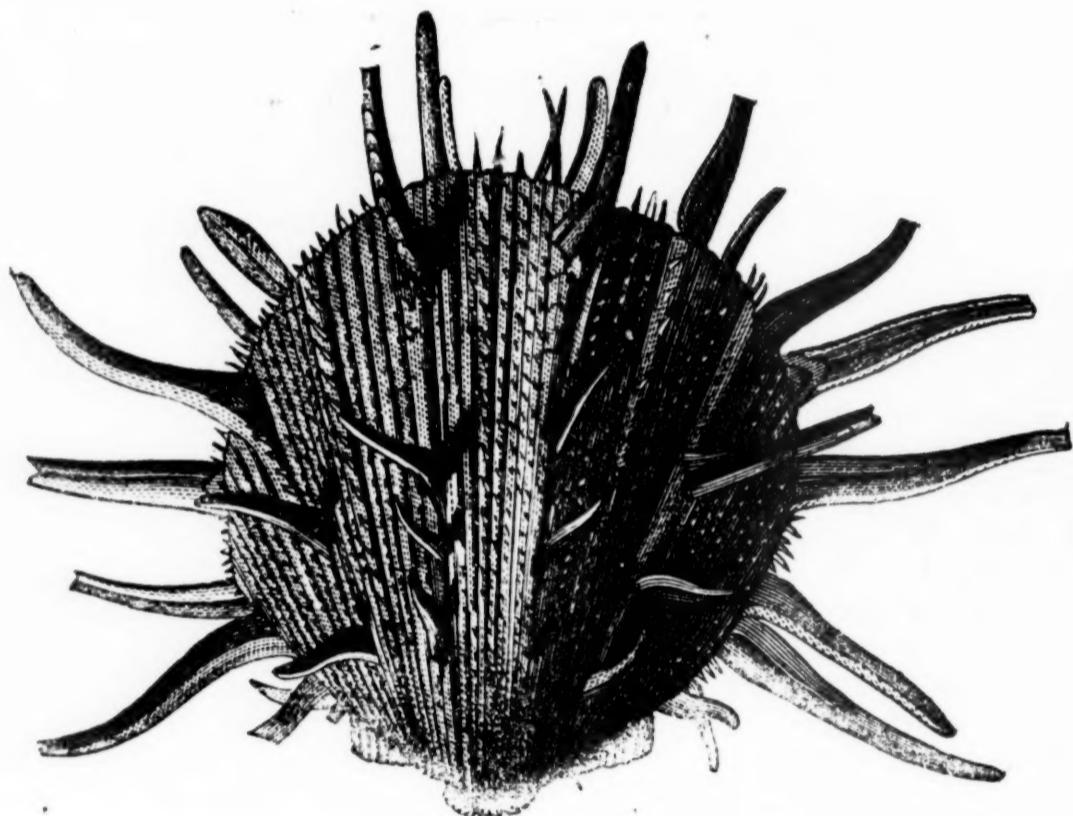
The well-known green Oysters obtain

their colour from the great quantity of ulvæ, enteromorphæ, and microscopic algæ found in some of the tanks, which give the water a greenish tinge, and are swallowed by the Oysters.

If we take into consideration the continually increasing demand for Oysters, the comparatively small number and size of the artificial beds where these molluscs are bred, and above all, the carelessness and waste with which the collection on the natural beds is performed (for, blindly confiding in the abundance of the Ocean, people only care for increasing the present supply, but do not think of the wants of the future), there is reason for apprehending that the time is not far distant when both consumers and fishermen will complain of the exhaustion of the beds. To guard against this danger it would be, certainly, highly desirable that the Oyster fisheries should not only be more carefully

watched, but that arrangements should be made for the formation of new natural beds, and carrying on the artificial breeding on a larger scale. The possibility of such a thing is proved, not only by the history of Molluscs, but also by experiments already made.

The spawning time of Oysters is from June to September. Instead of leaving their eggs at once to their fate, like the majority of marine animals, they remain for some time in the folds of the mantle, between their gill plates, where they are surrounded by a slimy matter. After growing in this fashion, the microscopic larvæ, provided with a natatory apparatus and eyes, are carried by thousands from the mother's shell and are drifted about by the current, till they find a firm substance to which they can attach themselves. Thus, the Oyster annually produces during the summer no less than one



THORN OYSTER.

to two million young, the greater part of which, however, perish during their wanderings.

We see, then, what an abundant reward industry would receive, if it succeeded in protecting the young Oyster brood and rendering it stationary at an early period; and that this could be easily effected in many places, is proved by the artificial Oyster-breeding in the Lago di Fusaro.

Between the Lucrine Lake, the ruins of Cumæ, and the promontory of Misenum, there is a small salt-water lake, about four miles in circumference, from three to

six feet deep, and resting on a volcanic, black, slimy bed. This is the Acheron of Virgil, the modern Fusaro.

Over the entire surface are seen, at regular distances, large heaps of stone, which are taken there and covered with oysters from Tarento. Round each of these artificial rocks, which are generally six to nine feet in diameter, a number of poles are driven into the ground rather close together, projecting slightly above, so that they can be easily drawn out. Other poles stand in long rows seven feet apart, and are fastened together by cords

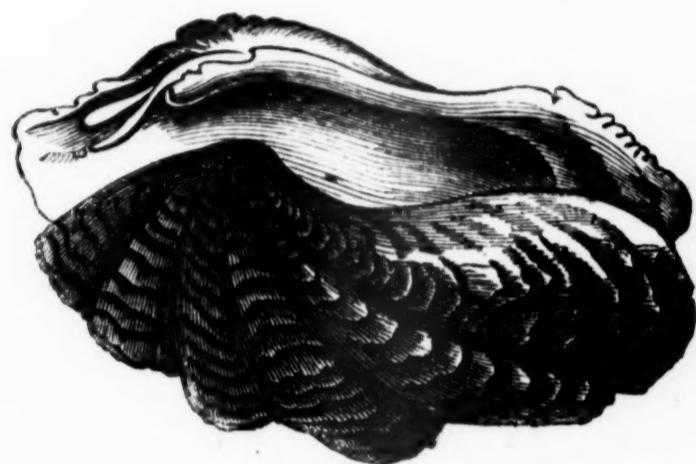
from which bundles of twigs hang down into the water.

All these arrangements are intended to serve for collecting the Oyster dust, which annually issues from the mother's mantle, and offer it a number of points of contact, to which it can attach itself.

In two to three years, the microscopic larvæ are converted into excellent Oysters. At the proper season of the year, the poles and bundles of twigs are drawn from the water, the ripe berries of this artificial grape removed, and the apparatus is again submerged, till a new generation produces a new crop. Thus, the Neapolitans, who are usually abused for their sloth, give all the coast-inhabitants of

Europe an example which deserves their closest attention; for in every country there are localities where a similar course of treatment, modified by circumstances, would convert dead lagunes and bays into luxuriant Oyster beds. It would even be an easy task to suspend bundles of twigs over the natural beds, which would catch a good portion of the larvæ, which could then be transplanted.

About a hundred years ago, an English gentleman had a few oysters thrown into the Menai Straits, where they have grown so rapidly, that they even cover the entire bed of the sea, and have become a rich source of revenue to the descendants of this provident gentleman.



TRIDACNA GIGAS.

We will now pass to another valuable bivalve production: to the real Oriental Pearls, which have always been valued equally with diamonds. They are produced by the Pearl Oyster (*Meleagrina margaritifera*) which is found in many parts of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, but principally in the Gulf of Manaar, off the Island of Ceylon, where their beds, the largest of which lies opposite Condatchy, extend for miles from the coast, on submarine rocks. Before the commencement of the fishing, the Government have the beds inspected, and they are let to the highest bidder, or the business is carried on by Government at their own risk and peril. In order not to rob all the beds at once, only a portion of them is fished annually, and thus a certain and regular crop of pearls is ensured. The fishing begins in February, and is ended by the beginning of April. The boats engaged in it collect in Condatchy Bay about twelve miles from Manaar. At gun-fire they all start together, at 10 at night, out to sea, reach the beds about daybreak, and fish till mid-day. Then a second cannon gives the

3

signal for returning to the Bay, where the owners are waiting for the boats, and carefully watch the unloading, which must be over by night. In each boat, there are twenty men and one master; ten rowing and pulling up the divers; other ten go down into the sea, four at a time, and thus, by alternately rowing and diving, keep their strength till the end of a day's work. When a man dives, he seizes a cord with the toes of his right foot, to which a stone is fastened for more rapid sinking, while the other foot grasps a purse-shaped net.

In the right hand he takes another cord; with the left, keeps his nostrils closed; and thus quickly reaches the bed. Here he fills his net most cleverly, as he can only devote two minutes to collecting the oysters.

As these divers are accustomed to the work from their earliest youth, they do not fear sinking fifty to sixty fathoms, and frequently repeating this laborious task. They will dive some fifty times in a morning, and each time collect about one hundred Oysters. At times, however, they are so affected by the task, that blood

3

flows from the mouth, nose, and ears. Although they generally remain but two minutes under water, some are able to stand it for five minutes.

During the fishing a number of Magicians and Priests stand on the beach, busily engaged in protecting the divers from the ferocity of the sharks by their incantations. These brutes are greatly feared by the fishermen, and their confidence in the talisman and prayers of the priests is so great, that they neglect all other precautionary measures. The divers are either paid in money, or receive a share of the still closed Oysters proportionate to the number caught. They must be strictly watched, for they are often guilty of robbery; at times they will even swallow pearls they find at the bottom of the sea in open shells.

The Oysters, on being landed, are laid by the owners on mats in carefully closed rooms, till the animals die. Then the shells are easily opened, and both the loose and sessile pearls collected. Frequently, too, the Oysters are separated from their shells and boiled, because pearls are found in the interior of the body and under the folds of the mantle.

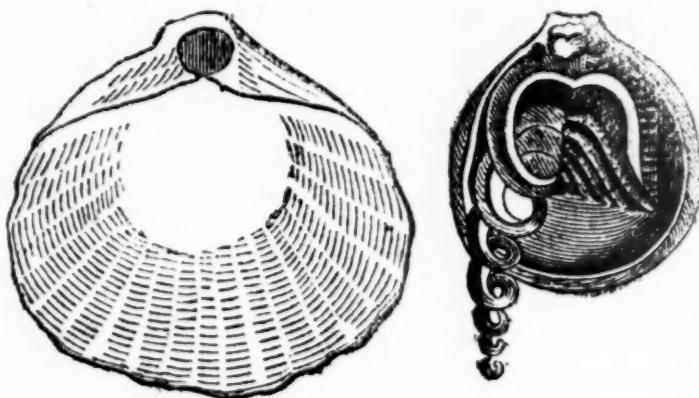
After the fishing is ended, the largest,

thickest, and handsomest shells are selected, which supply the mother-of-pearl; the rest are left lying on the beach, and these large piles of Molluscs poison the whole neighbourhood for a considerable period. But for all that, Indians may be found, months after, turning over the corrupting mass, in the hope of finding a few forgotten pearls.

The pearls are bored and threaded in the country, a task which is performed with admirable rapidity and skill. Powder of pounded pearls is used to cleanse, round, and polish them.

The South Sea also supplies the fashionable world with these valuable ornaments; but the Pearls of California and Tahiti are rarely introduced into trade, and have not the regularity and lustre of the East Indian.

Pearly excrescences are also found at times on the inner surface of the shells of our oysters and mussels. They are produced in the same way as the true Pearls, about whose origin, however, the naturalists are not quite agreed. We are stated to owe them, according to some, to a disease peculiar to the animal, which occasions such a strong secretion of the pearly substance, that it does not lie in



TEREBRATA.

strata on the bottom of the shell, but now and then forms excrescences, which harden into shapes more or less regular. Other naturalists are of opinion that the animal piles up this substance, to give the shell greater firmness and thickness, at any place where it has been perforated by marine worms, or injured in any other way. According to Philippi's investigations, the formation of Pearl is due to an intestinal worm, which is rendered innocuous by the exudation of the Pearl mass from the mantle. Lustre, size, and perfect regularity of form are the most material qualities of a fine Pearl. If it is rare to find all these conditions united in a single specimen, it is naturally far more

difficult to collect into a valuable ornament a number of Pearls of the same size and beauty.

Most of the Pearls found are imperfect and irregular: such as Seed-Pearls; and there are some concretions attached so firmly to the shell that they cannot be separated from it. The form and size, therefore, give the Pearls their chief value, for the large and thick shells of the Pearl Oyster, which cost so much less, are entirely formed of the same substance and display alternately a similar lustre.

Nature has given to the Bivalves the same beauty of colouring and variety of graceful and curious forms, as to the

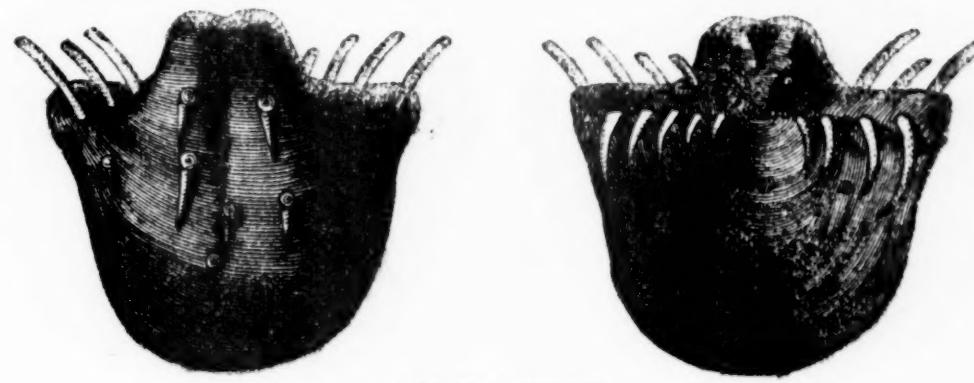
Univalves, so that they play an equally important part in all collections; and some fetch large sums.

Among the finest and most valuable varieties, are the Spondyli, which inhabit tropical waters, attach themselves to rocks like the Oysters, and are also eaten like them, though not nearly so delicate. They are distinguished by bright colours, but more especially by the long thorns and spurs with which they are covered, and for this reason they are also called Thorn Oysters (*Huitres épineuses*).

In no royal museum are the Spondyli so richly represented as in the shell collection of M. B. Delessert at Paris, the most perfect in the world, which, among other varieties, contains the two handsomest known specimens of the *Spondylis regius*, a shell so rare, that there is only one other example in Europe. No Tulip ever carried an amateur further from reason, than the longing for such a wonderfully beautiful Thorn Shell did M. R—, Professor of Botany at Paris. The price of the *Spondylus* was 6000

frances, a sum that far exceeded all the savings of the savant. Unhappily, the hard-hearted seller would not listen to any suggestions about giving credit. The dilemma was painful; but greater still the longing of the collector, who at length determined to turn his humble stock of plate (naturally without his wife's knowledge) into money, and thus placed himself in possession of the glorious *Spondylus*, which, in the joy of his heart, he christened the Regal.

But the dinner hour arrives, and we can conceive the amazement of the lady of the house at the strange metamorphosis that had taken place in her plate basket. The happy professor hurries home delighted, but the nearer he approaches his Penates, the slower his walk becomes; his cheerful brow is overclouded; the reception that awaits him begins to grow serious. But with such a treasure in his pocket, a man can defy a storm; and so he determines, after some hesitation, to appear before his enraged wife. But he was not prepared for such



FOSSIL SHELLS.

a storm as now burst upon him, his courage failed him; he forgot the shell. In his despair, he threw himself in his chair, and was only reminded of the presence of his treasure, by the terrific cracking of the box that contained it. Fortunately, only two thorns were broken off, but the terror of the poor collector was so profound, that his wife had not the heart to upbraid, but began to console him.

In former times, the Giant Shell (*Tridacna gigas*), which is now met with in every shop, was considered one of the greatest rarities. In the church of St. Sulpice, there is one, by no means the largest size, which was presented to Francis the First by the Republic of Venice, and is now used as a font.

This shell fish is about four feet across, and weighs from four to five hundred weight, the meat alone weighs thirty

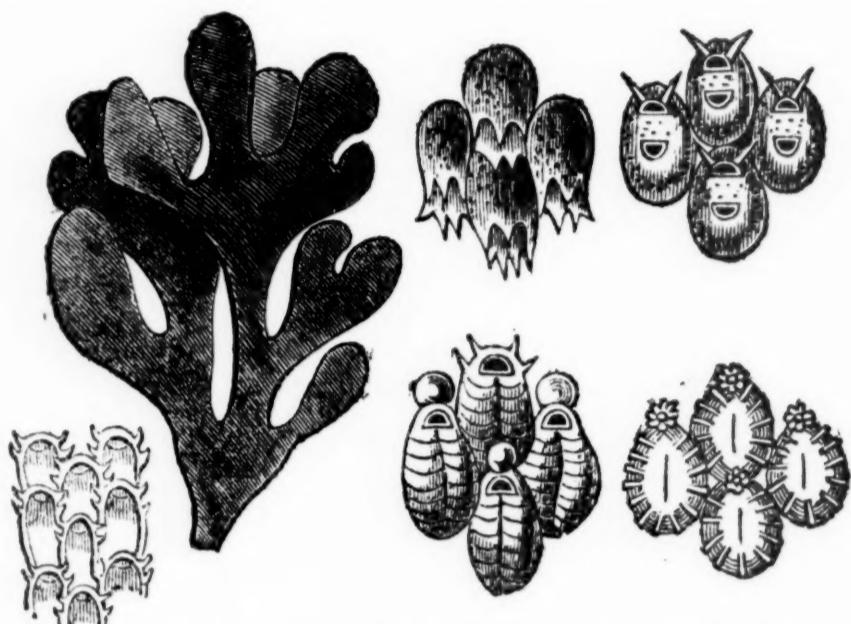
pounds. The muscular strength of the animal is said to be so great, that by closing its shell it can cut through a thick rope or chop off a man's hand. This *Tridacna* is found in the Indian and Southern Ocean, in Carteret Harbour, in New Ireland, at Tonga-Taboo, at the Moluccas, Timor, and off Waigiou, to the north of New Guinea. At first it attaches itself by means of a byssus, but afterwards lies freely on the coast or coral.

The *Tridacna*, and its near relative, the *Hippopus*, are distinguished by their magnificent colours. The mantle of the *Tridacna safranea*, described by Quoy and Gaymard, is at the edge dark blue and azure, with emerald spots, and inside a bright violet. When a large number of these animals unfold their glorious hues in shallow water, no garden or flower-bed can equal them in beauty.

The BRACHIOPODS, to which the Terebratae or perforated mussels belong, live, like the above described Acephala, in a double shell, but have no feathery gills; and in every respect are at a lower stage of organization. They attach themselves to submarine objects by means of a fleshy band. The mouth is situated between two fringed spinal arms on the stomach,

which serve to open the shell and seize the food. There are only a few existing varieties; but a large quantity of fossils, so that they are of great importance to the geologist, though otherwise offering but little interest.

The Bryozoa and Tunicata are also reckoned among the Molluscs. Among the former, we notice the Flustræ, which



FLISTRÆ, ETC. CELLS OF FLISTRÆ MAGNIFIED.

were formerly considered Polypi, because, like them, many thousands of them inhabit a common leaf-like hive of the thickness of paper; but, in their internal structure, they differ greatly from these simple animals.* To the Bryozoa also belong the Lepraliæ, which are so frequently found like a delicate net-work spread over the leaves of Algæ. To the unaided eye, they appear like a thin calcareous crust; but, if inspected through a magnifying glass, an astounding variety and gracefulness of form may be noticed in these animals, of which near forty varieties are found in the German Ocean.

The Tunicata comprise no less wonderful creatures in the Ascidiants, Pyrosoma, and Salpæ. The Borylli, which belong to the former class, form a gelatinous crust, covered with little stars, on the sea-weed. Each branch is the body of one of the individuals of which the strange colony is composed; and in the centre is the intestinal opening common to all. We shall speak of the Pyrosoma in the chapter devoted to the phosphorescence of the sea. The Salpæ lastly demand our attention through their most extraordinary alternation of generation.

They inhabit the warmer seas, and

* The Flustræ are so common on our own shores, that it is rare to examine the refuse line of high water without meeting with them.

swim freely, generally in considerable bodies. Each animal resembles a crystalline tube, through whose parietes the internal coloured parts can be distinctly seen. They are either found solitary, or in long chains, consisting of many similar individuals. These chains glide through the water with a regular, serpentine motion, as if a common will animated them, and yet each link is an independent animal, which continues to exist when the fraternity are fairly separated.

It is extraordinary that these creatures, apparently so varying, are the alternating generations of the same animal. The chain Salpæ exclusively go back to solitary Salpæ; and the latter produce only those which attach themselves to chains; or, as Chamisso, who first discovered this extraordinary process of development on his voyage round the world with Kotzebue, expresses himself: "A Salpa mother does not resemble her own daughter or mother, but her sister, her grand-daughter, and her grandmother." When Chamisso first made his discovery known to the scientific world, he was ridiculed as a visionary; but all later observations have not only fully confirmed his statement, but also discovered similar, or still more wondrous metamorphoses in the Medusæ, Polypi, Sea Urchins, Crustaceans, and other lower marine animals.

(To be continued.)

ROLAND THE PAINTER.

CHAPTER XII.

"EVIL BE TO HIM THAT EVIL THINKS."

MR. GABRIEL, the miller, or, as his friends more genteelly termed him, the corn-factor, passed at Ivy Bridge for a great man. And as the why and wherefore of some estimates of greatness may be worth considering, we have availed ourselves of the novelist's privilege, of journeying on the wings of fancy, being quicker than the steamer, and alighting for a brief space at Ivy Bridge. Mr. Gabriel had then the reputation at Ivy Bridge of being great, and was a little ungenerous in taking all the credit of his position to himself, seeing that Mrs. Gabriel had also contributed her share of the halo of success and gentility that surrounded them. This is no new feature in social life; and if we dared to lay bare some of the things that take place behind the scenes, one might be tempted to say, that all the credit had been given to the horse and none to the driver—so many Mrs. Gabriels are there in the world who stand in that position towards their affectionate spouses. But we were to speak of Mr. Gabriel, who, to begin with, was a keen hand at a bargain—with a shrewd and rapid glance at a cow, a sheep, a tree, or into a pigstye, he would calculate to a nicety the value of whatever he wished to buy, without any troublesome figures, and was rarely known to be deceived. He was fond of relating the different stages of his advancement in life, and as he did so, the acknowledgment he paid to his own merit, in having mounted one by one the slippery steps of Fortune's ladder evidently gave him no little satisfaction. This grateful and constant offering upon the altar of self-esteem had a most soothing influence upon himself, and was also not without its influence upon his neighbours. If Mr. Gabriel was once boots at the Castle, and was now the greatest—namely, the wealthiest man at Ivy Bridge, it went far to prove that Mr. Gabriel was no fool. It was true, some envious detractors whispered, that some of his week-day practices did not altogether tally with the excess of his devotion on the Sabbath. But great men are subject to these petty insinuations, and Mr. Gabriel went on his way rejoicing, and giving little heed to such malevolent surmises. And surely

such venal offences, even if true, were hardly worth noticing in an age when men keep a debtor and creditor account with their consciences, and balance their account when it gets on the wrong side by a few extra acts of devotion or a stiff cheque to a popular charity.

Having risen from the working classes, no one will wonder that Mr. Gabriel generally spoke of them as the "common people;" and this leads us naturally to speak of Mary Gabriel, his only daughter, because the contempt and hard expressions which Mr. Gabriel frequently used towards the poor of Ivy Bridge gave her the greatest pain.

Mary, while inheriting much of her father's common sense, was opposed to him altogether in his views of life, and frequently went very near offending him by the interest she took in the poor of the neighbourhood. Visiting the humble cottagers, teaching in the schools which Mr. Locke had established, and making friends even with the poor ignorant children who ran about the lanes, she tried to do all the good in her power. Frequently when her father met her upon these errands he sent her home angrily; but Mary, though unwilling to offend him, was too full of love and sympathy to be easily stayed.

One day Mary had been visiting some poor cottagers, and had come home very thoughtful.

"What makes you so serious, Mary?" said her father.

"I am thinking, papa, that, after all, poor people are quite as good, quite as virtuous, and quite as affectionate as the wealthy; and yet what hard trials they have to bear—I don't understand it."

Mr. Gabriel had come home from market that day, having made some unusually good bargains, and being more puffed up than usual, he did not care just then for the mention of poor people. He would much rather Mary had asked him to buy a new dress, or a garden hat, or any fashionable new music. Mr. Gabriel forgot just then that poor people, like the small print of this volume, cannot easily be dispensed with, though not near so imposing as the capital letters.

"Now, papa," said Mary, "you so often tell me of the wickedness of the poor, and their constantly getting into prison—how is that?"

"My dear," said her father, "there is one point, I grant you, respecting your poor friends: they have a good deal of temptation—perhaps more in some respects than the rich."

"Then I'm sure they are very much to be pitied," said Mary. "But do you think it is all their own fault that they are not so rich as you?"

"How do you know I am rich?" said her father, with gratified pride.

"Why, John, our foreman at the mill, has no carpet on his floor, nor any pictures on his walls, nor handsome Venetian blinds, nor a piano."

"I was going to speak to you about John," said Mrs. Gabriel, who rarely joined in conversation.

"What of him?" said her husband, carelessly.

"I really think you must raise his salary. The poor fellow works very hard and is very honest."

"How do you know that?" said the husband, whose policy was to believe all men rogues till he had proved them honest.

"Why, last night at dusk," said Mrs. Gabriel, "I sent him down to the village for some trifle, and gave him half-a-sovereign in mistake for sixpence. I never found out my mistake till he brought it back again."

"He brought it back! Well, to be sure, I wonder at that," said her husband.

"You won't believe of goodness in anybody," said Mary, in a pet.

"Perhaps because so few have any to spare, my love. But to show you I appreciate this, I will certainly find a way of helping John."

"Come now, papa, I'm glad to hear you in such a reasonable mood. I shall give you two extra kisses when I go to bed."

"Run along puss, it must be bedtime now."

As he spoke, a heavy rattling at the door startled them. It was so rare an occurrence at Ivy Bridge to have either a visit or business-call at ten o'clock at night, that they were quite surprised, especially as, in addition to the loud and hasty knocking, a great scuffling was heard also.

Mr. Gabriel ran and opened the door hastily to see what was the matter, when a well-dressed, handsome man, a little past middle-age, rushed into the room, holding by the collar, with a grip like a vice, our old acquaintance, Mr. Thomas Woof, otherwise Cheap Jack.

"I charge this man with an attempted

robbery!" said the gentleman. "Send for a constable instantly!—or stay," added he, "the fellow is too full of tricks to be left. A good piece of rope first, to bind his arms, and then I will give further particulars."

There was something too earnest and decided in the stranger's manner to be mistaken, and Mr. Gabriel, who had frequently complained of losses from his mill and storehouses, was delighted to have the offender in his power, and readily lent his aid to secure their prisoner.

To account for this scene, it will be necessary to describe an incident which took place an hour or two previously: Mr. Gabriel's foreman, having shut up the mill, was on his way home from work; when at a short distance from his master's house he fell in with Woof. "Cheap Jack" was known to some few in Ivy Bridge on account of his coming there yearly to the revel, and John had sometimes made little purchases from him. John, in his simple, honest head, never dreamt of the Mephistophelian philosophy with which Woof was about to tempt him, or he would not have listened two minutes. Artfully drawing him into conversation, Woof took soundings of the depth of John's character by first insinuating that he had never been properly appreciated by Mr. Gabriel. "You may call him a good master, if you like," said Woof; "but why don't he give you better wages, and do more for you? Why should he have fine clothes, and a fine house, and a first-rate horse to drive, any more than you or I, John?"

"I am not much of a scholar," said John; "but still I don't think you see things in the right light. I've thought about these things many a time after my day's work, and it has seemed hard at times when, as Mr. Locke says, all men are created after God's own image, that some do get the upper hand and try to crush poor chaps like us. But I'll tell you what I think about it all. If the world was to be turned upside down to-morrow, we should soon have poor and rich again for certain. And why they beat such as me is because of the learning. All we think about when our work is done is to sit down and drink a drop of beer and smoke our baccy. But men as wants to get up in the world don't do that. They put their wits to work as well as their hands, and make improvements and inventions; while all we say is, what can't be done to-day must be done to-morrow."

"Pooh!" said the other; "there are ways and means of getting at the tin without so much labour as that."

Woof's tone, more than his words, revealed to the foreman what was implied.

"I think, Tom," said he, "we had better part. You must have been taking a drop."

"Oh, you know what I mean, I see," said the other. "Now, then, just show—if you've got any pluck in you—show me the ways of the mill, and go home as soon as you like."

"It aint likely, Tom. I never did a man any harm yet, and I shan't begin to-night for your accommodation. Old Gabriel may be a toughish chap, I know, but his daughter generally makes up for all that; she taught my children to read, and tended my wife in a long illness. Only yesterday she gave me one of her father's greatcoats to go to church in. My old gal didn't know me in my swellish toggery. As to Gabriel, perhaps he'll think of me in his will."

His listener was quite out of patience.

"I'll tell you what, John," said he; "I bear you no ill-will, but I consider you a born fool!"

"Men may be *born* fools," said John; "but I fancy they must be *made* rogues."

So the men parted, little dreaming that every word had been listened to. The strange gentleman who had captured Woof had watched him after leaving the foreman. Woof, it seemed, having made no impression on the foreman, had determined to carry out his nefarious schemes without assistance. A horse and cart belonging to Woof had been left in the neighbourhood of the mill to convey away whatever plunder was most convenient, but just as Woof had effected an entrance, he was pounced upon, and taken captive into the miller's house, as we have already described.

While narrating what he had heard to Mr. Gabriel, the officers promptly arrived, and Woof, hand-cuffed, was carried off in their custody.

Just, however, as Woof was being taken away, he recognised his captor, and said with an almost fiendish delight, "Ah, my old friend, you have turned thieftaker, have you? But you need not glory in what you have done. I'll tell a little yarn to the magistrate about the clergyman's brother that will make him stare, I'll be bound."

The stranger was deeply affected, but calmed himself as much as he could,

simply replying to Woof, that he must tell what he pleased; "and," continued the stranger, "had I known who it was I struggled with in the darkness, I should not have acted otherwise, no matter what the consequences may be."

"Oh, you know me now," said Woof, sneeringly; "I thought you would have pitched over an old pal now you have risen in the world."

"Do not suppose I ever sank to your level," said the stranger; "but your threats will not move me from doing what is an act of duty to this gentleman," bowing to Mr. Gabriel.

The officers took Woof away, and the stranger also took his leave with a profusion of thanks from Mr. Gabriel. "If I should be required in this matter, you will have the goodness to inquire of Mr. Locke for me," said he, as he left the house, and pursued his way to that of the curate.

The Rev. Solomon Locke had not expected a visitor at this late hour. When Mrs. Whymper told him that a gentleman wished to see him, he little imagined who the stranger was. A moment after he rushed back into the room too much affected for some moments to speak, being followed by the stranger.

"It is Martin, ma'am—my brother, ma'am—my brother Martin," repeated he, nervously. Forgetting everything but the joy of seeing his brother once more, Mr. Locke was more excited than Mrs. Whymper had seen him for years.

The excitement of a first meeting after so many years being over, there were two points which caused the brothers intense regret. Mr. Locke was shocked when he learned that Martin would in all probability be called upon to give evidence against Woof upon the following day. All the plans he formed for keeping his brother's secret vanished at once, and he felt the keenest anguish he had suffered for years.

Another circumstance also pained him beyond expression. Martin had not been five minutes in the house ere he inquired for Roland, and his intense grief when he learned that Roland had left England, and principally through having learned the secret which had been so long hidden from him, was almost more than Solomon Locke could bear to witness.

An examination of Woof took place upon the following day. Martin had recognised him as a returned convict. But Woof, to avenge himself, had related

the whole history of Roland's father, whom he had seen frequently abroad while undergoing his sentence.

"I was afraid, Martin, how it would be," said his brother, sadly; "but I did not expect the bare facts would be brought forth under circumstances which would give them additional publicity."

"I will leave England at once!" said Martin, bitterly. "It shall never be said that I ruined my best friends as well as myself."

This, however, the brave curate stoutly resisted. Martin's despondency quickly roused his affectionate nature. "You shall do no such thing, Martin," said he. "You well know what a fight I had when I first came to Ivy Bridge, and I can fight still, never fear. We will live down their sneers, my dear brother, and you shall be one of the most respected men of this village."

But Mr. Locke, when he said this to cheer his brother, had a melancholy foreboding that the combat he proposed would end in his own discomfiture. Those who live in large towns, and take no notice perhaps of even their next door neighbours, can have little idea how a subject like this was ventilated at Ivy Bridge.

With all Mr. Gabriel's selfishness, it is but just to say, that whenever he heard Martin attacked, or Mr. Locke attacked for harbouring such a brother—a frequent occurrence—he invariably defended him to the utmost. The fact of his having put a stop to the robberies was no inconsiderable passport to his favour. It was reported, also, that Martin Locke had acquired an enormous fortune; and this weighed with him not a little.

"Evil be to him that evil thinks," said Mr. Gabriel at a vestry-meeting. "If a man makes a false step once in his life, is he never to be forgiven? You'll think well enough of him if he comes out with a ten-pound note this winter for blankets and firing!"

It must be confessed Mr. Gabriel knew something of the world.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHERE THERE IS SMOKE THERE IS FIRE.

MYNHEER KRALL should not too readily be forgotten by the reader, seeing that he was a man of consequence in Rotterdam as well as in the present history. To most

people he had been somewhat of a puzzle. Even his most ardent admirers were puzzled as to why he should marry, for instance. He could not have wanted a wife to laugh at his jokes, for he never made any; nor to listen to his conversation, for he rarely spoke; nor to exchange ideas with him, as he left such airy nothing as those to poets, painters, and suchlike rhapsodical and thriftless speculators.

Mynheer Krall rarely got beyond yes or no in his hardest bargains; consequently he had amassed a handsome fortune without much trouble. Yea, sometimes without speaking a word, had Mynheer Krall made his greatest hits—such is the power of genius.

The reader may be puzzled, perhaps, to guess how this could be done; we will enlighten him.

A merchant has certain goods for sale, and states the fact to Mynheer, who, not to show undue eagerness, says nothing, and looks, if possible, less than that. What can the merchant do? He names a price for his goods, and then commences the grand diplomacy of our worthy Krall. He does not speak; he knows better than that. He does not nod, wink, smile, or do anything that buyers of weaker minds would do under similar circumstances. He simply, sententiously, slowly, and methodically shakes his head. Yes, Mynheer Krall shakes his head, but not in any rapid, random manner. That would at once put five per cent. upon the article he is dealing for. Mynheer moves his head as though half a ton of wisdom at least had collected in his reflective organs, and thus prevented rapid movement.

The merchant feels what power there is in such a shake as that. He names a lower price, but Mynheer is shaking his head as steadily as ever. Lower and lower, but still from right to left, and from left to right, that ponderous intellectual globe slowly moves. Despair seizes the merchant's heart. He hesitates, then frantically makes another offer, which, by the firm tone of his voice and his abrupt manner, plainly indicates that he cannot go lower in price if he would. Now shines forth again the genius of a Krall. He can read character if he can read nothing else. Knowing full well what an excellent bargain is in store for him, the motion of his head is gradually reversed, and a gentle inclination takes place. The merchant makes an entry in his pocket-book, and Mynheer

Krall departs in peace without having uttered a word.

This, we submit, is a lesson worthy the consideration of buyers and sellers. It was no wonder that Mynheer Krall had the first reputation in Rotterdam for sagacity. He deserved it. Let no man say fortune is beyond his grasp if he can only shake his head.

Mynheer Krall had no wealthy parentage; he had received no education. He could not lay claim to the possession of knowledge. His bulky form precluded the idea of activity, yet fame and fortune had flowed to him as placidly as the canals of his beloved Rotterdam flowed onward to the sea. As to the mysteries of arithmetic, he left them to those slightly theoretical gentlemen who make large fortunes upon paper, and put off their creditors with one-and-sixpence in the pound. Mynheer Krall, to sum up his business tactics in a sentence, simply shook his head.

Mynheer Krall was very near losing this magnificent reputation when he not only took unto himself a wife, but an English wife, and a beauty withal. Handsome, accomplished, witty, animated—Mr. Gaffyr's sister was as unlike Mynheer as Rotterdam to London; more so, in fact, for the sluggish canals have not a goodly savour, neither has the Thames, and herein we trace one point of similarity. Yes, Mynheer Krall, though his face was as expressionless as that of a southdown; though his eyes were as dull as those of a boiled codfish, and his legs as thick as an elephant's; though he puffed his meerschaum like a factory chimney—and there was no act of parliament to make him consume his own smoke—Mynheer had wooed and won a beautiful wife, and his daughter had grown up more beautiful still.

Ere many weeks had passed, Roland was hopelessly entangled in the meshes of Louise's fascinations. Coming home on a calm July evening, as he saw her sitting on the lawn, he thought he had never beheld a more beautiful girl. Hers was a kind of beauty that would naturally charm an artistic temperament—animated, glowing, brilliant. Her manners were not always a true test of her character, so frequently did she indulge in whimsical caprices. At such moments, had it not been for the fine expression of her eyes, which told plainly the working of an ardent soul, one might have been tempted to set her down as a mere coquette. She

pleased Roland even before she dazzled him; and she continued to please him, for she was able to give an unusual degree of fascination to her manners by any sudden impulse of gaiety or amusement. At such moments her whole nature seemed lighted up by an electrical charm. Her eyes brightened, her cheek glowed, till those who saw her daily and knew how beautiful she was were astonished. If in her ordinary moods she was a lovely girl, when seen thus she was a divinity. She had many lovers, or such as considered themselves in that light, and each felt that she was capable of loving passionately, if once her deeper nature could be touched. All who came within the magic circle of her attractions coveted her goodwill and affection. Louise smiled when her lady friends hinted things not over-flattering to her amiability of character; but Louise was happy and heedless of all that was said.

It was with no little vanity that Roland fancied, before he had been many weeks at Rotterdam, that Louise treated him with more favour than any of the numerous admirers who flocked around her. Poor fellow! he was perhaps too blinded by his vanity to see how useful he was to Louise. The young beauty did not hesitate to avail herself of this obedient cavalier, and to make him a willing slave to her most fantastic moods. Roland, taking everything in earnest, imagined himself making daily progress in her affections, and began to indulge in the most blissful visions of the future.

Coming into the garden upon the occasion referred to, Roland saw Louise seated on the lawn, looking, in her pretty hat, tempting enough to turn any brain of moderate warmth and susceptibility. She was sitting in an easy attitude, not altogether unstudied—such as he might have suggested, had he been about to paint her portrait.

"Why, how serious you look," said Louise, looking up from a book she was reading, as Roland entered the garden.

"I was thinking as I looked at you—"

Roland paused.

"Yes," said Louise, to carry on the conversation, "you were thinking—"

"That Mr. Gaffyr—if he could be magically transported to this delightful lawn—would fancy he either beheld a queen or a fairy."

"Are painters, like poets, allowed a certain, or rather uncertain licence in

their conversation as well as in their works?" said Louise, laughing.

"Mademoiselle," said a girl, coming on to the lawn, "the vrow Boome is here with a bonnet."

"Show her into the parlour," said Louise. "I will go to her; and you can tell me if you like it," she added to Roland.

Roland did not fail to profit by the hint, and Louise, with a half-comic affection of indifference, allowed the bonnet to be tried on.

"I have ordered this bonnet to pay a visit to some very nice friends of ours, whom you will see shortly. They are coming to spend an evening with us next week, when I will introduce you. They are Belgians—very nice people, and much esteemed in Rotterdam. M. Rachelle has been everywhere. They live in grand style; but you will have an opportunity next week of passing your opinion upon them."

"For which they will be infinitely obliged, no doubt," said Roland.

"But why are you standing all this time? You do not suppose that we shall have settled the bonnet question yet, do you? We can chat while this process goes on."

Roland's disidence was easily dispelled thus. He did not appear likely to presume upon the familiarity she allowed.

"Since we have time for a little talk," said she, "pray tell me what were your views in coming to Rotterdam?"

"To fill the situation offered by your father; nothing more," said Roland.

"But surely, with your artistic talent, you must have different views of life than—such a man as Kloots, for instance. He is the only man of business I meet besides papa and Mr. Vanderbeck; but he is so intolerable, that I begged papa not to invite him any more."

"As to my business views," said Roland, "had you known me three months ago, and asked me if I thought of going into the counting-house, I should have laughed at the idea as simply impossible."

"Why do you so soon alter your mind?"

"It has been altered for me," said Roland. "I believed myself a great genius."

"And Mr. Gaffyr also believes so," said Louise.

"I can hardly say as much now."

"His opinion cannot have altered," said Louise; "for in his last letter

to us, he bade me not fail to introduce you to the paintings of our old Dutch masters, in order that their realistic tendency might cure you of a certain extravagance he had noticed in a picture which you lately exhibited."

"Excellent advice, if I could follow it," said Roland; "but I fear my late disappointment has shaken my resolve. I do not feel the least impulse at present to take up the brush again."

"You will have a splendid opportunity soon," said Louise. "We are going up the Rhine shortly; and papa, who has not left home these twenty years, is going also. I am not sure but that we shall persuade the Rachelles to go, and make quite a merry party. As to papa, of course he goes on business. I will speak to him about your going—you might take some glorious sketches by the way."

"To speak truth," said Roland, "I considered that I had failed as an artist, and became disgusted. Instead of genius, I fear I had only mechanical talent."

"I wonder if great men give up as easily as you have done after a first failure!" said Louise, with a glance half of contempt toward Roland. The look passed away in a moment, and she rattled on again as merrily as before; but it was long before Roland knew how much he had fallen in her esteem in those few moments.

Louise beckoned to the young marchand des modes to bring another bonnet.

"And as for you, Mr. Painter, having bestowed as much time and attention upon you as you deserve, will you please to do me a service?"

"Anything you may ask shall be done instantly."

"Not so fast. I think you told me that you were very diffident."

"Very, indeed," said Roland.

"Then I wish you to see Madame Rachelle," said Louise, "and bring me word at once if she will go with me to the morning concert. She is a very haughty lady, and you will have to put on your best behaviour to please her."

Roland started off on his mission somewhat curious about Madame Rachelle and her son. When he reached their house they were not at home, and he went back to Louise immediately.

Louise was in the garden, and Roland joined her there.

Roland was quite carried away by her, for it must not be supposed that our dull mode of retailing her gay and lively chat,

can give more than a vague general idea of the interest with which she had already inspired Roland. It was truly a somewhat hazardous companionship; for however reasonable it may seem for a young and enthusiastic man to be much in the society of a young and pretty woman, it is certain that under such circumstances platonic friendship is difficult if not altogether impossible. There is nothing sweeter than a woman's friendship; but that woman must be a mother or sister if it is to end with friendship. Louise was asking Roland further particulars of his artistic career, but Roland was by no means desirous of talking upon that subject—"Rather," said he, "let me speak of you than you of me."

"Of me; why, what can you say of me?"

"That since I have seen you, I have lived in a new atmosphere."

"That is true," replied Louise, "and Holland is a somewhat misty atmosphere too."

Roland was getting too spooney, as Arthur Gaffyr would have termed it, to appreciate the aptness of Louise's retort.

"You are never absent from my thoughts," continued he.

"Why, upon my word, the young man is almost upon the point of a declaration," said Louise, in a comic theatrical aside, as though speaking to some one on the opposite side of the canal.

"Indeed," said Roland, "you may take it so if you will, for I cannot help it—I swear—"

"No, don't," said Louise; "some of our bargemen do that too much already, as you will find when you have learned Dutch."

"You laugh at me," said Roland, "but you fascinate me in spite of myself—I know what a ridiculous thing it is for a poor fellow like me to talk thus, but the fault is all your own."

"You are joking, Roland."

"No, on my honour, I am not."

"Well, considering how foolish young men can be, as I know from experience, I will suppose you mean what you say; but my believing it will put an end to our further acquaintance."

"Why so?" Roland asked.

"There can only be friendship between us."

"And why?"

"I have at least twenty lovers already, and you may guess how unlikely I am to be constant to any of them."

"I shall die of despair," said Roland.

"Stuff!—the love of most young men is of an exotic nature, which with a little exposure to chilling words and freezing looks soon dwindle away—therefore, Mr. Artist, pray lose no time in arresting the progress of the disease."

"You are pitiless."

"I intend it," she replied. "The greatest attachment I have yet felt for any man is for one nearly double my own age, and do you know why? Because he is immensely rich, and evidently will not trouble himself much about me."

"I am extremely obliged for your confidence," answered Roland. "Am I right in naming M. Rachelle?"

"That is the man. You look angry—pray give me your hand, and let us be friendly."

Roland took her hand, and would have carried it to his lips.

"Oh, if you must be a lover," said Louise, "pray be a merry one, and then you may stand the ghost of a chance. You have no idea how tragical some of my lovers are;" and she pulled out of her pocket two or three letters. "Now here is one of my lovers who has lost all hope. He vowed, if I refused him, to commit suicide. He, however, took some time to think about it, for two months afterwards I received this letter:—

"I am about to commit a rash act, which will end at once my unhappiness and my life. For Heaven's sake write to me, and say that you will one day love me, so that with this one ray of hope to comfort me, my life may be still endurable."

"Pathetic, is it not?" said Louise. "I did not reply, however; but here is another writer, who says—

"I am rapidly sinking under your cruelty. It is too late now to spare my life, but I still ask that one word from you which may prevent my rejoicing to leave it."

"Of course I did not answer that. If the poor man had fallen into a consumption before he knew me, would it not be the height of cruelty to make him regret leaving the world when it was beyond doubt that his disease was fatal. To be candid with you," continued she, "I think you will require love to make you happy, and I am not quite sure that I can love anybody, because love is such an absorbing passion that one loses all other enjoyments entirely. I will be as friendly with you as you please, and use whatever influence I have for your welfare."

"I thank you," said Roland, "but cannot accept your proposal."

"Rather I cannot accept *yours*, you should say."

"I cannot see you without hoping," said Roland.

"Nonsense, Roland, we will be brother and sister, and continue the excellent friendship which the last few weeks have begun."

It was now dark, and Louise went into the house, leaving him alone.

In no very cheerful mood, Roland walked up and down the garden and indulged in a melancholy reverie. There was something pleasing in the monotonous flow of the stream, and the ear caught pleasantly the decreasing hum of the city as it sank gradually into repose after the bustle of the day. Roland's thoughts were vague and undefined. From Louise they wandered to England, and his conscience troubled him not a little when he reflected how he had, as it were, run away from the father who had so longed to meet him. He felt now that his own disappointment had taught him the lesson how sadly his father must have come back home after years of longing and anxiety.

While he thus mused, he heard a voice which thrilled him. He looked round but could see no one, and the house was in complete darkness. But he felt confident it was the voice of Louise. He distinctly heard some words spoken in a low tone. He held his breath, looked toward the canal, for from that direction the sound evidently proceeded. At this moment a boat was pulled to the edge of the canal nearest the garden, and at the same moment Louise stepped from it. The rorer, whoever he was, bade her good night, and she came toward the house. Roland made a noise with his feet upon the garden path to show he had seen her.

"Bless me, are you still there," said Louise. "I must have left you here two hours ago. You must be sadly in want of your supper. At all events, I am."

"You have doubtless had a delightful excursion," said Roland.

"Oh, yes, indeed; I met M. Rachelle on the quay and he rowed me home. That was M. Rachelle in the boat. I would have introduced him, but it was too dark for you to see him, and he has promised to fetch his mother from the opera."

What Roland felt in those few seconds it would be difficult to express in words.

His passion had already taken root deeply; but mingled with it was a gentler feeling almost amounting to pity for Louise. He pictured to himself the injurious consequences which might ensue to her if this careless, flippant manner was long indulged in. Left, as she had been, without a mother's guidance and control, he could easily imagine her making some false step which might embitter her whole existence, and it was not without reason he thought thus. What can be a better guarantee for the happiness of our maturer years than the remembrance of a tender mother and her anxiety for our welfare when we plunge into the great stormy ocean of life. Other feelings may be subdued, other memories may become faint and dim, but such memories as these are engraven in characters which neither time nor circumstance can readily efface.

But Roland judging superficially, had not judged fairly. Louise was not wanting in correct views of mankind, and Roland had disappointed her (though the fact was unknown to him) at the very moment when she would have given much in her secret heart if he had answered to her ideal. The flippancy and merriment with which she treated him only served to conceal her real feelings, and this Roland, in his ignorance of the sex, had failed to perceive. She might have chosen as she pleased. It was not wealth alone which tempted her. Mynheer Krall would have consented to her marrying one of his bargemen if he thought she would be really happier in consequence. No; Louise had looked for greater strength of purpose, more decision of character, and she already discerned that he was led by impulse—Louise was not wanting in common sense, giddy as she might seem.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

In these fast-going days, when we paint with the sunbeams, travel by steam, and talk by lightning, one would have thought that Mynheer Krall must inevitably be distanced in the race; but Mynheer, though he slept a good deal, and smoked a good deal, and talked but little, knew perfectly well what was to his advantage or otherwise. In business matters, Kloots generally had all the talking to himself; as, for instance:—

Kloots.—“I suppose, Mynheer, Mr. Locke can reply to the Liverpool letters.” Mynheer nods his head.

Kloots.—“Mynheer Vanderbeck will not give more than his first offer for the oak pieces, will you accept it?”

Mynheer shakes his head.

Kloots.—“There is the widow Zell, too, in the yard;” and he pointed to a woman dressed in a singular fashion, having an extraordinary decoration upon her head, consisting of two plates of gold upon each temple, meeting in the centre of the forehead—she was a Frieslander. “She tells me,” continued Kloots, “that her son is still unable to work in consequence of the timber falling upon him, and she asks assistance. I think a guilder a week would content her.”

Mynheer holds up *two* fingers.

Kloots.—“Will you make any stipulation as to payment back again, Mynheer?”

Mynheer shakes his head this time.

Many other subjects are brought forward and settled in the same concise style, and Mynheer leaves the wharf at length, inviting, in two words, his manager to spend the evening with him. It was upon this evening that Roland saw Madame Rachelle and her son for the first time. The effort which he made to be civil to them cost him some trouble.

Louise played and sang a quantity of fine German music, in which M. Rachelle, who had an excellent tenor voice, joined her. Roland knowing nothing of the effective manners which men long accustomed to mix in well-bred society readily acquire, felt himself completely thrown into the shade by M. Rachelle's showy talents. He understood several languages, spoke that of Roland with ease, and his knowledge of Art surprised the young painter.

Before, however, we draw up the curtain and show the side of M. Rachelle's character which is intended for public exhibition we beg the reader to follow us for a few moments behind the scenes, while for the sake of contrast, we will display M. Rachelle's virtues and talents in another light.

Ernest Rachelle had passed his infancy in Holland. But his father afterwards removed to Brussels, and becoming a banker there, amassed a large fortune. Brussels at the time we write of, 1830, owing to the events which were then taking place in Paris, was the resort of a numerous class which was only influenced by an idle, frivolous, empty, intriguing kind of life. Into this kind of

society Madame Rachelle plunged eagerly, giving free scope to her inclinations, and it was in such an unwholesome atmosphere as this, rendered still more destructive by the indulgence of his mother, who was vain of her handsome son, and also his father, who was a devoted lover of pleasure, that Ernest Rachelle passed his early years.

As may be expected, Ernest proved a worthy pupil of such worthy tuition. He had hardly passed boyhood, when he became entangled in a disreputable connexion with a young Frenchwoman, engaged at the opera in Brussels. The lady's scruples, if she had any, were easily subdued, and as she wished to remain in Brussels a short time after her engagement terminated, the money with which the banker's son was liberally supplied, answered her purpose admirably. After a few weeks, however, Ernest was astonished to find that his inamorata had suddenly deserted him in search of other prey. Annoyed and ashamed at the taunts of his youthful companions, who made a merry jest of his discomfiture, Ernest was not sorry to leave Brussels for a time.

Madame Rachelle having considerable influence, succeeded in getting her son appointed in some official capacity at Berlin, with a view of awakening his political interest. But Ernest had no notion of anything that required thought or study. He looked upon all real knowledge as pedantry, and only aspired to be a man of the world, and to be well received in society. He had already made some progress in this direction, principally by his facility in languages. He had learned these easily enough, for since his childhood he had heard many languages frequently spoken. Not that he cared for the inner beauties of language or for the literature of any country. He only wished to be able to rattle away fluently in whatever tongue might be spoken in the society which he met with. He had no feelings—no sympathies—yet so potent and deceptive is the charm of *manner*, that M. Rachelle soon acquired in all circles the reputation of being a charming companion—an amiable man, and a gentleman of perfect breeding. He could converse well upon any subject, and if he chanced to be thrown into the society of a real lover of art—as in Roland's case—he had the ready tact of keeping the conversation so near the surface, that profoundity had no chance whatever of drawing him beyond his depth, and thus many a learned

and original mind had been duped as to the extent of his powers.

Becoming disgusted with Berlin, M. Rachelle came back to Brussels, and took part in the political agitation which was caused by the rupture with Holland and Belgium. He had no patriotism, but simply desired a change of life; and when the agitation consequent upon the above events had subsided, he went to Holland, and remained there for some time.

Meeting with a circle of acquaintances who pleased and interested him, he remained there for some years, when the death of his father gave him possession of the wealth and influence he had long coveted. He bought a magnificent estate near Rotterdam, and his mother came there to reside with him. He imagined, shrewdly enough, that in the vicinity of a trading capital his wealth would give him greater influence than elsewhere. He had resided there for some years, when he became acquainted with Mynheer Krall and his daughter. A new and healthier ambition filled his mind. He would marry. After several years of fashionable life and dissipation, he now fancied he should relish the charm of a pure and quiet home. His old companions were therefore deserted for the society of Louise. Madame Rachelle saw what feeling had seized her son, and encouraged it. Although he had not declared his passion, he intended to take an early opportunity of doing so. Louise was young, gay, piquante—in fact, just to his fancy, and as far as he had the power of falling in love he fell in love with her. He was a handsome man, his dissipated life not having as yet told upon his features, and he congratulated himself upon an easy conquest.

To return to Mynheer Krall and his daughter. Matters were in this state when the expedition up the Rhine was planned. Of course, as far as Mynheer was concerned it was a purely business affair. He, worthy man, had he not been teased beyond all endurance by Louise, would have left, as he had done for many years, the entire control of all the business arrangements to Kloots, and have taken his ease in his darling summer-house at Rotterdam.

Through the influence of Louise, Roland was included in the party, and as Mynheer Krall would as soon have thought of flying as of travelling without

Kloots upon a business expedition, that worthy having installed his second in command at Rotterdam, shortly joined his master.

Roland, who had still hopes of some good angel interposing in his behalf with Louise, joyfully accepted her invitation. He had heard much also of the beauty of the Rhine, and his artistic faculty began to revive again.

He was charmed beyond measure with the scenery of the Rhine, having only seen the rural landscapes of Ivy Bridge, which, though not without a truly English charm of their own, could not of course be placed in comparison with what he now saw. It was the variety, the constantly changing aspect, the blending together in one harmonious whole, objects and scenery so widely different in character, which elsewhere are not seen united in the same picture. In the same scene the softest and wildest features were blended. The rude crag, the verdant meadow, the impetuous rivulet, the rich hanging wood, the ruined castle, the stately chateau, the picturesque vineyard, all brought their several charms to make the landscape unique.

Louise also was so charmed with the scenery, that when they arrived at Bingen she proposed a halt for a day or two. She had also another object in view—Madame Rachelle and her son had not yet joined them, and Louise thought it most likely that they would overtake them at this spot.

Roland was by no means charmed with the prospect, but as Louise was extremely kind, and showed no real anxiety for the advent of M. Rachelle, he thought less about it, and hoped for the best, which was the wisest thing he could do.

But with his impulsive temperament it was, while the wisest, at the same time the most difficult task for him, and it is hardly too much to say that he would have welcomed an earthquake or tornado about as cheerfully as the "coming man;" but youth is hopeful, and he made the best of the passing moment.

As to Mynheer Krall, he dutifully stayed at Bingen to oblige Louise, but could not for the life of him understand why people should find pleasure in what cost them so much trouble. To climb the hill opposite Bingen, as Louise proposed to do, for the sake of the magnificent view, was not to be thought of by a gentleman of Mynheer's inches. He was, therefore, left to his own enjoyments—namely,

smoking, sleep, and silence, in all of which intellectual treats Kloots lent his valuable assistance, and consequently the pair of philosophers passed their time as cheerfully as could be expected.

They were just about to start, and Roland was congratulating himself upon the delightful prospect of having the company of Louise entirely to himself, when Madame Rachelle and her son arrived. Poor Roland! They all climbed the hill together, and were well rewarded for their trouble. The bold foreground, with its rushing little stream, formed a magnificent framework for the vast plains of France stretching far away in the distance, while nearer at hand, in the rich luxuriance of the early autumn, were numerous vineyards and orchards. The Rhine beneath them flowed swiftly on to Manheim, winding amidst woods and tiny islands which repeatedly hid it from their view. Many objects of interest could be seen from this point. That huge barn-like building is the residence of Count Metternich Johannisberg, a name dear to all lovers of a good vintage. Opposite them, Ingelsheim, surrounded by vine-clad hills, calls up the wondrous days of Charlemagne. Beneath them was a cliff several hundred feet in depth, beneath which the Rhine rolled furiously along amid vineyard, mountain, rock, and ruined castle, till hidden by the spires of Coblenz and the grim battlements of Ehrenbreitstein. It was afternoon, and the sun was pouring a flood of golden light over the charming Rhineland.

Roland, enchanted with its beauty, was pleased also to see that the heart of the beautiful girl beside him was touched with the solemn beauty of nature. Even the somewhat obtrusive attentions of M. Rachelle were unheeded by her. "At such a moment," thought Roland, "could I have been here alone with her, what happiness!" Delighted as he was to perceive her sensibility, he was soured by the little chance he had of improving upon it. He felt also how little the society either of M. Rachelle or his mother were likely to draw forth the vein of genuine enthusiasm for all that was true and beautiful, which he could see existed in her nature.

Having feasted themselves with the glad beauties of nature, they hastened back to the hotel to enjoy a repast of a different nature.

Mynheer Krall had sustained their absence for several hours with his accus-

omed equanimity. He had partaken of several cups of tea, not unmixed with a liquid of a more ardent nature—had smoked two or three pipes—had two or three naps, and was like a giant refreshed when they returned. But there was evidently something of weighty import on his mind.

Roland, as he sat enjoying his dessert in the balcony of the hotel, happened to glance at his commander, and saw by the unusually keen expression of Mynheer's features, that he was about to deliver himself of a few consecutive sentences. He feared, however, that this result would never be accomplished without an active stimulant. The favourite meerschaum had been laid aside in deference to the ladies, and Kloots had gone to a noted hostel at some distance for a supply of genuine Schiedam, which was not everywhere to be obtained of a quality likely to satisfy Mynheer's palate. Roland, however, fetched and filled the pipe, and at the same moment Kloots returned with one of those mystical-looking flasks which are the daily delight of Dutchmen.

"I have just seen the captain of the raft, Mynheer," said Kloots. "The arrangements are completed, and we can return as soon as you please."

Mynheer took a preliminary puff of his meerschaum, and then and there delivered the longest speech which he had ever been known to make.

"I am truly thankful," said he; "and when I get back to Rotterdam, never more will I leave it, till I am carried to my last resting-place. I will enlarge my summer-house, and will alter the inscription to 'peace and contentment.' Of all kinds of madness, the strangest appears to me to be visiting such countries as this. One goes down a hill merely to ascend another, and the rivers flow as if they were running mad. A nice level green meadow cannot be seen for these stupid hills."

"Mynheer," said Kloots, in a consoling tone, "we shall enjoy our dear old Rotterdam all the better after this."

"God be thanked, if it should be as you say," replied Mynheer, whose animation left him in the disgust with which he contemplated such landscapes as these. "Do but consider for a moment, Kloots, our beautiful summer-house, and the yard paved with many-coloured stones. Can you not see the fish-pond, the little house of shells in the midst of the aviary, with all my beautiful foreign birds?"

"Lovely indeed," sighed Kloots, in sympathy.

"And the bed of tulips, which no man in Amsterdam or Rotterdam can rival?" said Mynheer, complacently.

"True enough," said Kloots. "Mynheer Vanderbeck was ready to die of envy when he saw them."

"And the lovely prospect from the edge of the canal," said Mynheer, in a sort of rapture. "That is something to remember, indeed. Think, Kloots, of the green meadows, as smooth as this table, and the twenty-four windmills. When I think of all this, Kloots, I own I am overjoyed at the prospect of our returning so soon."

"And so am I, Mynheer. Confound these castles and vineyards, and this perpetual going up and down hill, to say nothing of their accursed wines, which freeze one to think of," said Kloots, with a shudder.

Kloots had touched a sympathetic chord. Taking up the flask which he had procured, Mynheer held it up to the light, and as the sun beamed through the green glass, it showed that the flask was well filled. Kloots' mouth watered in lively anticipation. Not yet, however, was the delightful realization to come. Mynheer Krall was too shrewd a tactician to give Kloots the flask in its present state. He therefore first applied it to his own lips, and after a considerable time, with a long-drawn sigh, handed it to his retainer.

Roland smiled to see how equally the contents of the flask had been divided.

Kloots finished it with an avidity quite the reverse of his master, who loved to prolong his enjoyments, and held up the flask with a meaning glance.

Mynheer gave a nod, which was less decided than usual—perhaps owing to the fatigue occasioned by his late conversational powers—and relapsed into his accustomed sphinx-like stolidity, while his more animated aide-de-camp went to have the flask refilled.

Madame Rachelle was evidently bent upon doing her utmost to secure Louise for her son, even if he made no great effort himself. Aware that any insinuations against Roland would perhaps pique Louise, who still showed the young artist considerable favour, she nevertheless omitted no opportunity of drawing the conversation towards some point in which M. Rachelle was likely to outshine the young Englishman. Sometimes, how-

ever, the lady's annoyance at the friendly tone adopted by Louise towards him led her to take deeper soundings; such, for instance, as an openly patronizing tone like the following:—

"I shall regret, Mr. Locke, if you leave Rotterdam. Such an accomplished amateur must not be lost to our society here. And allow me to remark, Louise, that you should induce your friend to go into society a little more. Nothing takes away a constrained manner so readily as mixing with men of the world."

"I fear the society of *women* of the world is not equally efficacious," said Roland, justified perhaps in some measure for his rudeness by the offensive insinuations of madame. M. Rachelle opportunely proposed a row on the river.

Roland could handle an oar skilfully, and they pulled the ladies to some beautiful spots on the stream. Madame Rachelle was too politic to appear offended with Roland, and made herself quite amiable during the remainder of the day. They were very merry, laughing, chatting, and singing; and Roland, who had brought materials at Louise's request, sketched a scene which particularly enchanted her. Roland had sketched with apparent carelessness, chatting merrily all the time; but though a mere outline, it was both faithful and vigorous. Louise could not restrain her admiration, and thought it only required colour to be a first-rate landscape. "But art does not seem so difficult, after all," said she.

"This may appear easy enough," Roland replied; "but you must take into consideration the labour required before one has attained this ease and facility. Several years of study ought to enable one to execute a sketch like that easily. Besides, one gets a familiarity with every kind of landscape from practice and observation. Frequently, too, in scenes like these, nature gives us some general features which enable an artist to execute a pretty faithful landscape, even from a description of the scene. There is nothing to be wondered at in this. Some things and people baffle all comprehension."

The subdued tone in which he uttered these words, and the simplicity of character which he displayed in disclaiming all merit for the sketch which had pleased her, gave her some stings of conscience which were rather painful to her.

Roland had gone a little higher up the hill to make this sketch. Madame Rachelle being tired, had rested herself upon

a jutting piece of rock. M. Rachelle had gone for some refreshments which had been left in the boat, and consequently he and Louise were alone.

Louise noticed that he was looking at her with a half-dreamy enthusiastic gaze. A deeper feeling than she imagined filled the heart of the young painter, as he said softly, but in tones that were tremulous with passion, "There is one thing which is beyond my art, which is the lovely expression of your countenance. If I could achieve that, I should rival the greatest masters of antiquity."

Louise was quite disenchanted, she misinterpreted him. "He is merely thinking of me as an artist, after all," she said to herself. "There is no depth of feeling in this; the charm of a glowing landscape would rouse as much enthusiasm."

Roland, in the meantime, only conscious that he was extremely happy in her presence, took a hasty outline sketch of her face, intending to fill it in from memory.

In the meantime Madame Rachelle had recovered from her fatigue, and her son returning from the boat with the provisions, did the honours of the repast like the finished man of the world he was.

He gave Louise the full benefit of his courtly attentions, which she not unwillingly received; for in Roland's manner toward her just before, she had only recognised the admiration of a lover of art. With this view in her mind, Roland appeared to have a less ideal love for her than even M. Rachelle, who in reality did not know a Vandyke from a Vandaub. M. Rachelle just now seemed an enthusiastic cavalier beside Roland, and as he was evidently under the inspiration of a happy frame of mind while Roland was pensive and somewhat dull, he was by far the more interesting companion.

Madame Rachelle watched the change with evident pleasure, while Roland felt at once attracted and repelled by Louise, a feeling which at this moment gave M. Rachelle a great advantage over him. M. Rachelle having also greater knowledge of the world, was quick to perceive that he had made a more favourable impression than usual, and followed up his advantage with alacrity.

It was nearly nightfall when they again reached the hotel. Being the last day of their stay they had made the most of it, for upon the next they returned to Rotterdam.

Roland worked hard at the portrait of

Louise; and one evening, shortly after they came home, it was shown to a little circle, amongst whom Madame Rachelle and her son were numbered.

Madame had noticed the expression upon Louise's face on the day when Roland had been sketching at Bingen, and had not forgotten it, but like a prudent general she reserved her *coup-de-bataille* for an important occasion. The opportunity had now arrived, and she would not fail to make the most of it.

"Why have you given our dear Louise that expression?" said Madame to Roland.

"To what expression do you allude, madame?" said Roland.

"Why, if I did not know to the contrary, I should have said that our charming Louise had been offended with her artist when the portrait was taken!"

Louise blushed faintly, and madame was satisfied.

Roland said, angrily, "I certainly never intended to give her portrait that expression, madame."

In fact, madame knew perfectly well that no such expression existed in the portrait, but by her cunning she had thus artfully made herself master of the position.

The first time madame was alone with Louise she clenched the nail which she had already driven.

"Your friend is an enthusiast in art," she said. "I hope he is not complacently taking your portrait to serve as the model for some stupid Venus or Titania, or some day or other our charming girl may be figuring in one of the public galleries with less drapery than would suit the modesty of the original. Mon Dieu, I should be disgusted with the thought."

Madame Rachelle knew again how unjust she was to the young artist, but she had gained her point. She had conjured up an idea in the mind of the modest and sensitive girl which rapidly annihilated all her sympathy for Roland.

Meanwhile, if we follow the young painter to his quiet chamber, we shall see him seated before the portrait, his eyes shaded with his hand, and a small lamp before him. He had touched and retouched the picture, but was still dissatisfied. At last, quite wearied, he put out his lamp, muttering as he did so—

"Surely it must be a good likeness, after all, though not so faithful as a photograph, which only shows one expression."

He went to bed, having first placed it so that upon awaking in the morning, he might see it the first moment.

"Is it possible," thought he, "that I cannot discover warmth of heart and spontaneous feeling in the possessor of such a face as that? Surely it must be there."

Some days passed, but Roland had no opportunity of speaking to Louise; when he did so at last, she rallied him upon his want of perseverance in giving up his art so readily. "You are too enthusiastic, too restless, too impetuous to succeed as a man of business," she said. "Besides, have you not felt the desire of achieving some great work?"

Poor Roland could not make out a very good case on his own behalf, and he again drove Louise from him, with her confidence in his strength of character entirely destroyed.

In the meantime, M. Rachelle, assisted by his excellent mother, had not been idle. Seeing that he had evidently advanced in Louise's good opinion, he had used every effort to secure his position.

He had, as we have already hinted, a charming villa in the neighbourhood of Rotterdam, and Louise was frequently invited thither by Madame Rachelle. While walking one day in the grounds, M. Rachelle seized the opportunity which he had long waited for, and declared his passion.

Louise had expressed some admiration of the chateau and grounds, and M. Rachelle, upon "that hint" spoke.

"And can you suppose, charming girl, that I intend to sink into the life of a country gentleman and live here alone?"

"I should fancy you were not much to be pitied if you did so," Louise replied.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, such a life wold be too monotonous, too aimless. I have somewhere read of a rich man who had pined all his days for leisure and a country life. At length he acquired his object, but became the most unhappy of mortals. He watched the opening brilliancy of spring, the glowing warmth of summer, the rich fullness of autumn as it faded into winter, but as he looked idly on he seemed to have no place in the scene."

"Monsieur is growing poetical," said Louise.

"Can it be wondered at when Mademoiselle Krall is his companion," said M. Rachelle, gallantly. "In her society, a desert would seem a paradise. Cannot you read my thoughts, charming girl?" said he, warming with his subject. "You do not suppose I could long spend my life here alone? I should sit in these large rooms disgusted with myself, my life, and all around me; and if such a grief should come upon me, you, charming Louise, will be the sole cause."

It is unnecessary to follow the whole of this scene, or the transactions of some days following. Madame Rachelle, now the ice was fairly broken, brought the weight of all her heavy artillery to bear upon "her charming Louise." Madame painted in vigorous colours her delicious anticipations of becoming more than a mother to Louise, who had never known the happiness of a mother's tender care; she expatiated upon the excellencies of her son, his talent, his kindness of heart, his knowledge of the world—but before all, his intense love for Louise. She did not fail also to dwell upon the delights of her son's tastefully decorated mansion, of the advantage which it possessed in being so near to the residence of Mynheer Krall. In short, the far-sighted lady lost no opportunity of dwelling upon any point likely to advance her son's cause.

There was a marked difference, it was true, between M. Rachelle and Roland; the former was the elder by at least ten years, and one loses so much sentiment in these ten years. At five-and-thirty we are apt, instead of plunging wildly into whatever fancy floats before us, to count the cost of each adventure, and reckon upon the future by the experience of the past. There are few of us who have not had some stern experience of the world by the time we arrive at this age.

Madame Rachelle dexterously urged this as an advantage. Ernest, she said, was not a fickle youth who would be likely to change his mind. So, between madame and her son and the wayward moods of her own mind, before many days had passed, Roland's chance of winning Louise had vanished entirely.

(To be continued.)

MARY.

My Mary is no longer here,
 —No longer by my side,
 As when of yore she gazed on me
 With such a woman's pride ;
 She's gone to take her long, long rest ;
 Her last and peaceful sleep :
 Her spirit haunts the realms above,
 And I am left to weep.

I loved her so, 'twas bitter pain
 To see her droop and die ;
 'Twas keen indeed to hear her pant,
 And watch her stifled sigh ;
 And yet I watched and listened too,
 —I thought *she* might be spared,
 And oh ! she knew the pangs I felt,
 And hid the truth I feared.

I begged her not to leave me yet,
 So lonely I should be ;
 I looked into her eyes, and thought
 She'd strive to live for me ;
 But no ! oh no ! she pined away
 Just like an autumn leaf,
 Whilst I in childlike weakness stood,
 Subdued with silent grief.

One morn I went to pray with her,
 I went to pray and weep ;
 The prayer was said in simple words,
 And she sank back in sleep ;
 I watched and watched, in anguish long,
 I kissed her as she lay—
 I watched till solemn night came on,
 I watched till break of day :

I touched her cheek—'twas cold as stone,
 And I was frozen too ;
 I stood all mute—unmoved—alone,
 —Myself I scarcely knew !
 They spake to me, they bade me go,
 They told me she was dead,
 And yet without a tear I stood,
 Nor heeded what they said.

For many days I hovered there,
 Still listening for her breath,
 I heard it not, yet scarcely knew,
 'Twas sealed by silent death ;
 They took her up, and scattered round
 Sweet herbs of wilding bloom,
 And gently laid her fairy form
 Within its grassy tomb.

I wandered on, as wandereth
 A weed upon the wave—
 I gathered flowers from nooks she loved
 To plant upon her grave ;
 I brought home buds and leaves which
 grew
 Where she was laid to rest,
 And as a mother clasps her babe,
 I clasped them to my breast.

My Mary's gone, the flowers are here,—
 All withered though they be,
 And if but pale and odourless,
 They're priceless gems to me.
 There's still a heart within my breast,
 —Though faint its pulses beat,—
 And those poor shrivelled herbs still seem
 My Mary's smile to greet.

I've wept and wept since Mary died—
 As though my heart would break,
 And still there burns a love within,
 Which grief shall never shake.
 My life will henceforth ever be
 A pilgrimage of pain ;
 A withered bloom now meets my eye,
 And tears steal forth again.

EXPERIENCES OF A REAL DETECTIVE.

By INSPECTOR F.

No. 4.—CAUGHT AT LAST.

THE good folk of Taunton, Somersetshire, were thrown into a state of intense excitement on the morning of the 6th of November, 1835. An atrocious burglary, accompanied by murderous violence, had been committed early the previous night at an isolated dwelling, a few miles out of the town, called Vale Lodge, inhabited by Mrs. Searle, a widow lady of property, two women servants, Mary Carter and Anne Love, and a stout youth, Richard Ray, about seventeen years old, who groomed the pony, drove his mistress out, waited at table when there was company, and so on. The gardener did not sleep in the house; Richard Ray's dormitory was a loft over the stable.

I was first made acquainted with the leading facts of the case by printed slips, always forwarded without delay when any startling or extraordinary crime has been committed to every police station, for the information and guidance of the officers. Ultimately, I myself was specially engaged in the investigation of the affair; but some time before then, it happening that a relative of mine, settled at Taunton, was in the habit of sending me the *Courier* of that town, when a week old, more or less, I became acquainted with many particulars, some of which gave a sort of ghastly aspect to the abominable outrage, and in their effect went near to drive an eccentric but very respectable man into a lunatic asylum.

The widow's late husband, Mr. Searle, was a first-rate shot at pigeon matches, not one of which was made within I know not how many miles round, but he was a competitor, in nine cases out of ten a successful one: Mr. Searle, was also an enthusiastic cultivator of prize fruits and vegetables, gooseberries, cucumbers, and what not. As the chief prizes in such contests were often silver tankards, flagons, cups, Mr. Searle, during a quarter of a century, mainly devoted to such pastimes, had accumulated an extraordinary number of these articles, not one of which he would have parted with for twenty times its value. He also took great pride in displaying those glittering

trophies of successful skill, upon festal gatherings at Vale Lodge; and had a large, grotesquely fashioned buffet constructed in which they showed to advantage, and wherein were many yet unfilled niches, when the worthy man died suddenly of tetanus, how precisely occasioned I do not remember to have heard.

The widow took a mournful pride in strictly keeping every article to which her husband had attached value, or was in any way a memento of himself personally, in exactly the same place and condition as when he died: for this reason she listened with impatience to the wise advice of friends who remonstrated upon the indiscretion, to use a mild term, of keeping portable and easily disposed of property of such value, in a dwelling so far distant from any other, and which, since her husband's death, was unprotected at nights by a grown man. There was also a far larger quantity of ordinary plate than one would expect to find in such an establishment, kept in the house—so that the booty to be obtained by a successful robbery was unusually large, and of the kind most coveted—gold and silver coin, by burglars.

One or two preliminary items jotted down—the sequent facts will fall into intelligible order of themselves. At the time of the burglary, Mrs. Searle was suffering from erysipelas in both legs, and could not under ordinary circumstances leave her bed, except when lifted out that it might be made. Mary Carter, cook and housekeeper, since the attack of erysipelas, had slept with her mistress every night. Carter, about forty years old, comely for age, and much greater attractions to a prudent bachelor who had outlived the foolish fancies of early manhood, was industrious, thrifty, and saving to such good purpose, that during the twenty-four years she had been in the service of Mr. and Mrs. Searle—an excellent place, no doubt, it must have been—Mrs. Mary Carter had placed in the bank between three and four hundred pounds; and owed not a penny in the world.

This creditable state of things was known to and keenly appreciated by Mr. Amos Dyke, a respectable grocer, who had not very long started in business for himself at Taunton. He had succeeded, at the mature age of forty-three, to the business of his deceased master, whom he had faithfully served both as apprentice and assistant. The stock and good-will of the business Amos Dyke purchased of the widow, paying for the same partly with the savings he had accumulated, and the remainder with bills at long dates—not knowing at how swift a pace time gallops with a man who rashly adds his quota to the circulating medium of his country by transferable promises to pay at a certain, inexorable date.

Many of Amos Dyke's customers were respectable country families residing from two to perhaps twelve miles out of Taunton; and who were called upon twice per week, either by Dyke himself, his assistant, or apprentice in a light cart, to take orders and effect deliveries. Amos Dyke himself went oftener, no doubt, than he otherwise would have gone, in order to cultivate the good will of Mrs. Mary Carter, the cook at Vale Lodge. His wooing prospered; Mrs. Mary Carter, first indirectly by hints, finally by open avowals, informed her mistress that she had decided upon changing her position in the world; meant, in short, as soon as Mrs. Searle, whom she greatly grieved to part with, should have suited herself with another cook, to enter into the bonds of holy matrimony with Mr. Amos Dyke.

Mrs. Searle could not reasonably object, however much she might regret her old and faithful servant's determination; but she, at the same time, strongly advised that all her hard-earned savings should be legally secured to herself. Mrs. Mary Carter was entirely of the same opinion, and Mrs. Searle's solicitor was requested to do what was needful in the matter. Mrs. Mary Carter was quite sure Amos Dyke would not demur to such an arrangement; in fact, she almost doubted if he was aware she had saved a sixpenny piece. Amos did not court for money, not he; she was quite sure of that—quite. It appears, however, somewhat strange that, notwithstanding she was so positive of her wooer's absolute disinterestedness, Mrs. Mary Carter could, as the sequel proved, never have said a word to him of the settlement which Mrs. Searle's lawyer had been instructed to draw up in legal form.

It was finally settled that the wedding-day should be the first day of the next year. It was then October, and Mr. Amos Dyke fumed and fidgeted at the unreasonable delay, as if he was a hot-blooded young fellow contracted to blooming seventeen. The comely cook must have been extremely flattered by the ardour of a suitor to whom, as she asserted, money was no object; but her resolution could not be shaken. The cook engaged by Mrs. Searle to supply her place, could not leave the situation she then held till Christmas, and Mrs. Mary Carter was not going to put so kind a mistress to inconvenience on any account, not even to oblige Amos Dyke.

Poor Amos Dyke found himself placed by that decision in a frightful fix. One of those terrible bills, amount two hundred pounds, would fall due on the 5th for the 8th of November, and to meet it without the aid of his wife's—that was to be—purse, was just out of the question. His was principally what is called family custom, which, though lucrative in the result, involved the giving of, upon an average, six months' credit, and he should not even begin to receive his Christmas bills till the honeymoon was about half over. What was to be done? He had counted so surely upon Mary Carter's pretty hoard, that the sudden shock of disappointment stunned him for awhile. Something it was necessary to do, for his credit, his means of life were at stake. He endeavoured to raise the money by first pledging his personal security, and offering large interest to several well-known loan-mongers in Taunton. Declined. Driven to desperation, he tendered as security for the accommodation a bill of sale, warrant of attorney, judgment bond—anything, with yet higher interest—repayment to be made on the 3rd of January. Only one party affected to listen to the proposal, a Mr. Jay, who subsequently gave evidence upon the subject. He finally refused to advance the money, and on the 31st of October wrote a note to that effect, directed to Mr. Dyke.

Only eight days betwixt the distracted grocer and absolute ruin, if the bill, which he knew had been discounted at one of the Taunton banks, could not be met. Pushed to extremity, he made up his mind to play his last, and as he felt very hazardous, card. The apprentice was ordered to put the mare to immediately, which mare, it is necessary to ob-

serve, grazed, when not at work, in a field a little out of the town, rented by Dyke. In the same field was his cart shed and stable. Whilst the apprentice was gone for the horse and cart, Mr. Amos Dyke dressed himself in holiday attire. I have said he was an eccentric man, a character which he, I think, mainly, if not entirely acquired by his singularity of dress. When a lad he had greatly admired white cord knee-breeches and top-boots, and though such articles had been disused by all persons except huntsmen for more than a quarter of a century, Amos Dyke (whose disposition was strongly leavened with obstinacy) stuck to his tights and tops. So dressed he mounted his chaise cart, and accompanied by the apprentice drove off to Vale Lodge.

What exactly passed between Amos Dyke and Mary Carter, having neither been published in a newspaper or deposed to in court, I cannot relate; but the result of the angry altercation was well known: Mrs. Mary Carter would not lend Amos Dyke a shilling, much less two hundred pounds, and the enraged suitor, in a double sense, rushed out of the house foaming with rage. He shook his fist at the window of the room in which the humble request had been proposed and positively refused, giving vent as he did so to foolish words expressive of the most ferocious hatred, and threats of wreaking condign vengeance upon his so lately beloved Mary; continuing all the way home, said the apprentice, John Sawyer, to grind and gnash his teeth and swear awful.

The preface done, I go on to the strictly police portion of the narrative.

At ten o'clock on the evening of the 5th of November, the two women servants at Vale Lodge were seated at supper in the kitchen. Richard Ray supped earlier, and was just gone off to bed, when the noise of gig or cart wheels was heard approaching the back of the house. Whatever the vehicle, it stopped at the door of the passage leading to the kitchen, through which Richard had passed to the stable-loft, and which Anne Love was in the habit of locking and barring the last thing before going to bed. The women were asking each other who on earth could be calling at that time of night, when in rushed two ruffians with masks on their faces; grotesque paper-masks, such as are sold at toy-shops, and are in request on Guy Faux

days. The women screamed, though believing for a moment that it was really some Guy Faux foolery, especially as one of the burglars wore *white cord knee-breeches and top-boots*. Their screams were soon stopped, their doubts at an end. Both received a terrific blow on the head, inflicted by what are called life-preservers, which deprived them of consciousness, and both fell as if dead upon the floor.

Richard Ray, a brave lad, heard the screams, and partly undressed as he was, hastened to ascertain the cause of such outcries, snatching up as he passed through the stable a three-pronged fork. At the door he saw *Amos Dyke's horse and cart*. Passing quickly in, he was met by a man wearing a mask, and having on top-boots and white cord knee-breeches. The man turned and ran back into the kitchen as if for help. Ray followed, and found himself in presence of two men, both masked. Mary Carter and Anne Love were lying motionless, apparently dead upon the floor. A struggle for mastery ensued, during which the mask of the second burglar Ray saw—not him with the tights and tops—fell off, affording the lad a distinct view of his features,—a man of fair complexion, bright light hair and whiskers. The ruffian stooped and turned round to pick up the mask, a movement which Ray improved by driving his three-pronged fork into the fellow's posteriors. Almost at the same moment, he himself was felled to the ground by a terrific blow on the head, and he remembered nothing more for two or three hours afterwards.

And when he did awake to consciousness it was some time before he could remember where he was, or what had happened. His first idea was that it was Sunday morning, and that the ringing out of the church bells awoke him. By and by, the sight of the still motionless women on the floor, awakened memory—he remembered all that had passed with shuddering terror—also, that in one of the kitchen cupboards a jar of spirits was kept. He crawled thither, took a good gulp of brandy, and greatly strengthened, rose upon his feet, lit a candle, and looked about him. As he did so, he heard, or he was dreaming, footsteps upon the stairs leading from the bedrooms to the kitchen; feeble, hesitating footsteps. Richard Ray was a bold stout lad; the brandy revived his courage, so snatching up the three-

prong fork lying on the floor, he stole softly towards the door which shut in the stair, opened it, and saw Mrs. Searle, his mistress, creeping feebly down, to ascertain what had happened. The terrified lady, on awaking at her usual time, was surprised at not finding Mary Carter by her side, and fearfully alarmed, when, after continually ringing the bell for she knew not how long, no one answered it, and no other sound could be heard in the house. (It was no doubt this ringing which helped to arouse Richard Ray, and which to his dreaming fancy was that of church bells.) Nerved by terror, Mrs. Searle, spite of erysipelas, got out of bed, wrapped herself round with a shawl, and was descending the stair, as described, when Richard Ray opened the kitchen door and discovered her. He pacified the poor lady as well as he could, assisted her back to bed, then opening the window, sprang a powerful rattle, always kept in Mrs. Searle's bedroom, with all his might. This soon brought people to the place; a boy was sent off pony-back to Taunton for a doctor, and meanwhile Mary Carter and Anne Love, both still insensible and moaning heavily, were carried to bed.

All the silver salvers, cups, &c., as well as the ordinary plate, it was soon discovered, had been carried off, no doubt in the cart which Ray had seen at the back door. The lad did not say whose cart it was—he almost feared to do so. He would wait till questioned by a magistrate.

The surgeon bled both the women, and administered cordials. Anne Love he did not think in much danger, but of Mary Carter, though her mind seemed after a while clearer than that of her fellow-sufferer, he had very little hope. The constable of the hundred and several of his assistants had arrived, and Mr. Bradley, reiterating his opinion that Mary Carter might not survive many hours, perhaps not three, not two, suggested to that functionary that it would be advisable to obtain the attendance of a magistrate, in order that the poor creature's dying deposition, if she had any to make, should be taken in proper form. Master Constable agreed, and himself went off immediately in quest of one.

Mr. Bradley remained at Vale Lodge, and when James Flenneker, Esq., a magistrate for the county arrived, repeated his opinion, that Mary Carter would not, so great had been the nervous shock she had sustained, completely

rally, and might expire at any moment. He added that she was quite sensible, though weak as a little child. The dying woman's deposition was then taken; a tedious business, severely tasking the magistrate's patience,—and when he at length elicited, in faint, broken, yet coherent sentences, that Amos Dyke was one of the ruffians by whom she and Anne Love had been struck down, he could hardly believe his ears. "Amos Dyke, the grocer! Impossible! The poor woman cannot know what she is saying," added the magistrate, addressing Mr. Bradley.

The surgeon believed Mrs. Carter knew perfectly well what she was saying,—extraordinary and startling to any one who knew Amos Dyke such a statement must be. "When you, sir, have taken her deposition, Mrs. Searle will acquaint you with a circumstance, which, in my humble judgment, goes far to corroborate this unfortunate woman's assertion."

"What did you say was the name of one of the burglars?" asked the magistrate again, turning to, and bending down his head to catch the feeble accents of the deponent.

"Dyke—Amos Dyke—to be revenged on me—wicked—wicked man!"

"Did you see his face?"

There was no answer, though the question was several times repeated. Mary Carter seemed to have relapsed into unconsciousness. The surgeon drew near, felt the feebly fluttering pulse, then poured a teaspoonful of cordial down her throat. It seemed to slightly recover her. The magistrate gently repeated his question.

"Amos Dyke—I tell you—Amos Dyke—Revenge—because—because—. Wicked—wicked man," the dying woman, after a pause, faintly added. Then a strong convulsion seized her—another! "Mary Carter will give no further evidence," said Mr. Bradley. "She is gone."

Mr. Flenneker was greatly shocked, but it was necessary that he should not pause in the execution of his imperative duty. He accompanied the surgeon to Mrs. Searle's bedroom, and was informed by that lady of the serious altercation that had taken place a few days previously, caused by Mary Carter's peremptory refusal to lend Amos Dyke two hundred pounds, which if he did not obtain by a certain day near at hand, the eighth instant, Mrs. Searle believed Carter told her, he would be utterly ruined;

that being so refused he had fallen into a frenzy of rage, swearing she should bitterly repent it. This being merely hearsay—Mrs. Searle herself not having been present during the altercation between Mary Carter and Dyke—had no legal force; but when Richard Ray, brought before the magistrate, swore that the horse and cart he saw at the back door were Amos Dyke's horse and cart, and that one of the burglars wore white cord breeches and top-boots, the magistrate could no longer resist the weight of evidence, and forthwith granted a warrant for the arrest of Amos Dyke, the presumed burglar and assassin.

I may here remark that when talking over the foregoing details, which I have condensed from the *Police Gazette* and *Taunton Courier*, with a brother officer, a man of rare acuteness, he entirely agreed with me, that the circumstances which vanquished the scepticism of the magistrate, were just those which should have strengthened his incredulity. For it was inconceivable that a man, not absolutely insane, should proceed to the execution of such a crime, not only in his own well-known cart, but dressed in a way that would cause him to be recognised by any chance passer by. To be sure, it might be, and was indeed alleged, that the night was pitch dark, and that the burglars intended to, and believed they had effectually silenced for ever all three servants; but they certainly had not taken the precaution to assure themselves of that to them all-important fact. Their having left Mrs. Searle alive and unmolested, a point suggested in Dyke's favour by a local print, went for nothing. He must have known that that lady was confined to her bed, and may have believed, hearing no stir in her chamber, no bell rung, that she was sleeping the whole time, which was indeed the fact.

To resume my collation of the evidence as detailed in the *Taunton* papers.

By the time the warrant went, duly sealed, nine o'clock had struck, and as such news flies with often unaccountable rapidity, hundreds of persons in Taunton were eagerly discussing almost as many versions of the sad story, though all agreeing that there had been a burglary and murder committed at Vale Lodge, and that Amos Dyke was implicated, long before the constable arrived to execute the warrant.

"Is your master, Mr. Amos Dyke, within?" said the constable, addressing

Thomas Major, John Sawyer, and Martha Dawes, the accused's man-assistant, apprentice, and servant-of-all-work, who were standing together in the shop talking over the terrible news, and commenting thereupon, not, it may be presumed, from their glib replies to the constable, in a spirit favourable to their master.

"Is your master, Mr. Amos Dyke, within?"

"He is, and in bed, sir," replied Thomas Major; "the very first time I have ever known him to be in bed after seven o'clock."

"He slept at home last night?" said the constable, who could not bring himself to believe in Dyke's guilt.

"Can't say—can't say. What we do know is, that we shut up shop last evening at eight o'clock—one hour before our usual time, on account of the fireworks, he said—that he then dressed himself in his best—top-boots, white cord knee-breeches—and went out, taking the latch-key with him, and telling us not to sit up for him. We did not sit up for him, and can't say what time he returned. Before six o'clock, however, it must have been, as Martha is always up at that hour."

"He must have gone a precious long journey," said the apprentice, "for I found the mare in a bath of sweat this morning, and the chaise-cart, which was washed as clean as a new pin only yesterday afternoon, covered with wet mud."

"And the top-boots outside his door this morning, which I polished just before he went out, are in a filthy state," joined in Martha Dawes.

I expect Amos Dyke—a man naturally, or at least by habit, of a penurious, skin-flint disposition, which the harassing difficulties besetting him would naturally tend to render still more austere—was a stern, hard taskmaster.

Master Constable had heard enough, and requested to be shown the way to Amos Dyke's chamber. The order was obeyed with alacrity; the whole posse mounted the stairs, and finding the door not locked, quietly entered the sleeping man's bedroom.

Amos Dyke may be said to have been sleeping, inasmuch that his eyes were closed, and he was not awake; but his was no slumber of the senses which knits up the ravelled sleeve of care: he moaned uneasily, ground his teeth, from time to time flung his arms wildly about, clearly showing, in the opinion of the lookers-on

that he was the sport of some torturing terror which murdered sleep.

He was roughly roused. Starting up in bed, he stared around bewilderingly, begged, whilst hardly awake, for mercy, imagining, if he could be believed, that the terrible bill had become due, that he was arrested upon it, and about to be hauled off to gaol. When thoroughly awake, and made to understand that he was a prisoner accused of burglary and murder, he fell back in his bed as if shot, without a word, and when compelled to rise and put on his clothes, remained silent, dumb, gazing first at one, then at another, as if he imagined himself to be under the spell of some inexplicable, horrible delusion—enchantment. He was still in that state when he entered the common gaol, pursued by the hootings, the execrations of an excited crowd, and was thrust into a felon's cell.

I give the following extract verbatim from a Taunton paper. It would be impossible to shorten it:—

BEFORE THE MAYOR AND A FULL BENCH OF MAGISTRATES.

On Tuesday, Amos Dyke, who had been formally remanded, was brought up for final committal. The depositions of Mary Carter the murdered woman, of Richard Ray, Anne Love (who we are glad to hear is in a fair way of recovery), of John Sawyer, and others of less importance, were read over to him. He made no remark, and seemed to listen with a kind of fretful impatience, as if they in nothing concerned him, which may or may not have been mere acting. The reading done, he asked in his turn for permission to read a paper he held in his hand. The mayor said he and his brother magistrates were bound to hear all he had to say or read, but cautioned him, especially as through his own obstinacy he was not shielded by legal advice, and as the Bench had fully determined to send the case before another tribunal, that he would act more wisely by deferring what he had to urge till he appeared before a jury of his countrymen. Still, if he persisted in reading the paper in his hand, the statements in which, he must remember, might be used against him, the magistrates would pay every attention to whatever he might have to urge. The prisoner persisted, and in a calm, monotonous voice and tone, read the following strange, if true, story.

"I do not dispute the truth of one

particle of the evidence which has been given against me, except that of the unfortunate deceased, Mary Carter. They are all witnesses of truth, and so was she, in her own conviction; but she does not say, she could not be made to say, she saw the murderer's face. The peculiar dress worn by the execrable villain, combined with the recollection of our unhappy quarrel, induced a strong, sincere, but incorrect and utterly unfounded conviction that I was her murderer. So much for the evidence upon which I am to be arraigned for my life, my innocent life—innocent, I mean, as regards the crimes of which I am accused. I have now to give my version of how I was occupied on that dreadful night, the night of the 5th of November. About half-past four o'clock on the afternoon of that day I went, as I seldom fail to do, to see if the mare was properly littered down and provided for the night. Returning, I was accosted by a well-dressed, middle-aged man, who said, as nearly as I remember, 'Well met, Mr. Dyke. I was about going to your house, but I can deliver my message here.' I asked, what message? He answered by saying he was the head clerk at Mr. Champneys, at the Willows, to whom I had applied about three weeks previously for the loan of two hundred pounds, which request had been declined. I said that was so, and the stranger went on to say, that Mr. Champneys had reconsidered the matter, and if I would bring him that evening the securities I had offered, to the Willows—he had, I knew, given up his town office—he would hand me a cheque for the money. I, surprised and elated, asked if the morning would not do. The man, who incidentally said his name was Jenkins, answered 'No,' unless I could wait till Mr. Champneys returned from London, for which he would start by the night coach, which passed his house at about three in the morning. I said it was out of the question that I could wait for Mr. Champneys' return from London, my need being pressing. The man, Jenkins, said he had so understood; and this was the reason Mr. Champneys had put himself out of the way, as it were, to send a special messenger to suggest that, if still in want of the two hundred pounds, I should call upon him at the Willows that evening, not earlier than half-past nine o'clock, as he would not be home till that hour—nor much later, as he should retire early, in order to obtain a tolerable

night's rest before the arrival of the London night coach. I promised, with a joyful heart, to be punctual, and the man went away. I can see now plainly enough how gross was the bait by which I was lured to destruction; but we all know that a drowning man will catch eagerly at straws. Every gentleman I address is aware that the Willows is distant between six and seven miles from Taunton, and that it is led to, for a considerable part of the way, by a bridle path. Now, I have never been on horseback in my life, and had no choice but to walk. I set out at about a quarter before eight—not eight, as Thomas Major has stated. The night was not so dark when I started as it soon afterwards became, the moon, which I had not thought of, having set before nine. I reached the Willows, an out-of-the-way, solitary mansion, as everybody in Taunton knows, at, by my repeater, three minutes beyond half-past nine. I was surprised to see no lights in the house; nevertheless, I rang the gate-bell loudly, again and again, refusing to believe that I had been made the dupe of a malicious hoax; and it must have been close upon ten when I desisted, and should not then have done so, but that in prowling angrily round the premises, my eye fell upon a printed bill, announcing that the house and grounds were to be let: application to be made to an agent in Taunton. It was with much difficulty I could read the bill, so dark had the night become; but I had no sooner done so, than I felt convinced Jenkins had played off an infamous hoax upon me, though with what object I could not imagine. Anger is always hasty, blind. I am constitutionally subject to fierce gusts of passion, and was boiling over with rage. I took the wrong turning, blundered about for three or four hours, and did not reach home till past three in the morning. This is all I have to say, with the addition of a solemn declaration, made in awful contemplation of the possibility—probability, I ought to say—that I shall be shortly hurled before the presence of the Almighty, that it is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so help me God!"

"The prisoner's statement," continues the Taunton paper, "was listened to in breathless silence, and when concluded, no sound or sign indicated the impression it had made, either favourable or unfavourable to the accused. The magistrates spoke together for a few minutes, and

then the mayor, addressing the prisoner, said—

"We have listened to the statement you have read with attention, and if the concluding adjuration be not a blasphemous falsehood, you are a much to be pitied, unfortunate man. But assertion, however confident and, it may be, plausible, cannot be set against sworn evidence given by unbiased witnesses—the witnesses of truth, as you yourself admit; nor have you suggested any probable or possible motive that could have induced any human being to personate you, to make use of your horse and cart, returning it afterwards on the night of the murder and burglary. No one saw you walking in the direction of the Willows—no one saw you returning thence. Therefore, without wishing to unfairly prejudge the case, the magistrates hold to the decision I before announced to you. You are fully committed for the wilful murder of Mary Carter, to the next March assizes."

The Taunton case excited a good deal of discussion amongst us, but the general public, not being readers of Somersetshire newspapers or police gazettes, gave no heed to the subject. If the *Times*, gravedled for lack of matter during the parliamentary recess, had chanced to have lit upon the case, and devoted a leading article thereto, all England would have been discussing it immediately; but the loudest thunder of provincial journalism seldom reverberates beyond the narrow area where it bursts—rumbles—and expires.

We, I repeat—meaning by we, inspectors, superintendents, and others who meet in Scotland-yard to compare notes—vivaciously discussed the Taunton case; and opinions, as well as I remember, were pretty equally divided. One party inclined to the belief that Amos Dyke was the victim of some diabolical plot; the others, that he was a canting humbug, and a thrice-sodden ass, practically, over the bargain. This was *their* difficult point; but how else account for his going to Vale Lodge in his own horse and cart, and wearing those absurd tights and tops. I think the believers in his innocence would have been more numerous and more confident, had he not concluded with that rubbishy, worn-out "So help me God" tag;—which dock flower of speech ever since Thurtell's trial for the murder of Weare, stank in the nostrils of every man connected with a criminal court.

Amos Dyke was fully committed ; there was an end of the business for at least four months, as the matter would no doubt have died out of the metropolitan police mind, but for a succession of burglaries which, in one particular or another, constantly recalled to memory the Taunton case. The house of a gentleman, whose name I forget, residing in the vicinity of St. Alban's, was entered just as the servants living on board wages, the family being absent, were going to bed, by two fellows wearing masks of the same kind as those used by the burglars at Vale Lodge. The servants, three women and a lad, were bound, gagged, but not otherwise ill treated, and all the plate in the house, a large quantity, was carried off in a cart. At Walthamstow, Essex, the same game was played, still by two fellows wearing the same kind of masks ; and one morning printed slips were distributed at all the police-stations, describing a most audacious attempt on the part of two men in the same disguise, to possess themselves of the plate, much of which was hired, at a Mr. Bignold's house, Forty-hill, near Enfield. Mr. and Mrs. Bignold had given a ball and supper to a numerous party of friends, all of whom, by a little after four in the morning, had left. Mr. and Mrs. Bignold and family and the servants were all in bed before five, save the porter, an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital, who had slept through the night on purpose that he should keep guard over the house and property whilst the rest of the servants, worn out with fatigue, snatched two or three hours' rest. The old soldier had been about half an hour at his post, the house being still as the grave, when he fancied he heard a cart approaching over the lawn. Peeping forth he saw, in fact, that a cart was come up just close to the back of the house, and that beside it were two men in masks. The veteran had read the accounts in the papers of the burglaries I have just enumerated, and had no doubt that these were the identical ruffians for whose apprehension a reward of one hundred pounds had been offered. Having a double-barrelled pistol carefully loaded with ball, Henry Jukes believed himself in for a slice of luck, which, not to share with others, he determined not to call any one, as he might easily have done, but accomplish the capture alone. Crouching down under the corner of a projecting mantelpiece, he watched, pistol in hand,

the burglars' proceedings. They seemed to be quite familiar with the fastenings of one of the kitchen windows, which they raised in a trice, and in crept one,—the other was following, when, as ill-luck would have it, Jukes could no longer repress a cough he was troubled with. The sound caused the fellow who had entered to glance round ; he saw Jukes, and with an exclamation of terror made for the window. The soldier fired in haste, with both barrels at a time—missed, and had but just time to catch the fellow by the leg as he was vanishing through the window. Pulling him back into the room, a desperate struggle ensued, during which the fellow's mask, being torn off, disclosed the features of a middle-aged man of fair complexion, light hair and whiskers,—a face he would know again amidst a thousand. The struggle was too unequal ; the aged veteran received a blow in the pit of his stomach which doubled him up, and before one of the servants, roused by the firing of the pistol, could arrive, both the burglars were beyond pursuit, though the sound of cart wheels whirling along at furious speed was still audible.

A middle-aged man of fair complexion, light hair, and whiskers, the precise description given by Richard Ray of the robber he had stabbed with the three-prong fork ! We no longer doubted, at least I did not, that those daring, ubiquitous villains were the miscreants that had murdered Mary Carter, and would, if not caught and convicted themselves, bring poor Amos Dyke to the gallows. Why or wherefore they should have personated the Taunton grocer, was, it is true, an inexplicable mystery. Still, I felt certain in my own mind that the Vale Lodge, St. Alban's, Walthamstow, and Forty-Hill burglars were the self-same brace of villains. An additional reward of fifty pounds was offered by Mr. Bignold, and as we had obtained from a market-gardener whom they passed on the Enfield road at the rate of ten miles an hour in the direction of London, a description, such as it was, of the horse and cart, bettered somewhat by the gate-keeper at Stamford Hill, we were in great hopes of running the game to earth. Jukes, when he recovered his breath from the terrific blow in his bread-basket, if I may be permitted to use an expressive vulgarism, was savage as a bear at having missed earning the one hundred pounds reward, and volunteered to patrol the streets of London day and

night in company with officers in plain clothes, for the mere chance of meeting with the fellow "of fair complexion, light hair and whiskers." Soon promising indications that we were likely to strike the right trail were hit upon, and the chase followed up with vigour and perseverance, appeared to be almost certain of success.

I was one of the most eager in the pursuit, and was so engaged on the fourth day after the attempt at Forty-hill, when, upon turning out of Bishopsgate-street into the Minories, I saw at no great distance off a tall fellow coming towards me at toppling speed, pursued by a shorter stoutish man, shouting as loudly as his panting state permitted, "Stop thief!—stop thief!" I did stop thief, putting out my foot as the tall fellow was rushing past, and by that little trick bringing him down in the road with stunning violence. The pursuer came up almost immediately, thanked me, and looked about for a policeman, I being in plain clothes.

"Don't you really know me, Mr. Roberts?" said I. The man stared for a moment, then recognising me, laughed at himself for being such a blind buzzard as not to have known who I was at the first glance, and gave the tall fellow in charge.

"Of what do you accuse this man?" I asked, as we walked on towards Worship-street.

"Of robbing me of a gold watch and chain on the 4th of November last, at Douglas, in the Isle of Man. I detected him in the very act; but though I gave immediate pursuit, he soon ran himself out of sight. I am quite sure he is the man; I would pick him out of ten thousand. When I met him just now, he knew me the instant our eyes met, and set off at the speed you witnessed instantly."

Mr. Roberts, it is necessary to state, was known to me as the landlord of the Magpie and Stump, in High-street, Whitechapel, a very respectable house of its kind, and respectably conducted. Roberts himself was not a man of prepossessing exterior; his nose, which was more than usually prominent, was twisted on one side as by a blow or other violent injury, and his cunning, restless eyes had a not very slight cast. The impression upon the whole was the reverse of agreeable; but in his case, as in many others, appearances were deceitful, he

having lived with credit at the Magpie and Stump for several years.

At the hearing before the magistrate, at Worship-street, the prisoner, who gave the name of John Williams, made but a boggling attempt to deny the crime imputed to him. His guilt was manifest, and he was ordered to be conveyed without delay, to Douglas, Isle of Man, and to be delivered into the custody of the authorities there, Mr. Roberts undertaking to accompany the officer in charge, and prefer the accusation before the Manx magistrates. Thief, officer, and landlord left London, per Liverpool, *en route* for Douglas, the same evening.

Our hopes of capturing the two burglars grew fainter and fainter, till nearly all of us lost heart. I was the most sanguine of ultimate success, and expressed myself so confidently in the matter that the Commissioner directed me—through the Superintendent of course—to visit Taunton, and see if any information of value could be picked up there.

I gladly obeyed the order, but was soon reluctantly convinced that I might as well have remained in London. Richard Ray could only repeat the deposition he had made—Anne Love, ditto; and fire would not have burnt it out of either of them, that the robber in white cords and top-boots was Amos Dyke. Ray added, that his recollection of the features of the man from whose face the mask dropped off was fresh as ever. His description of that face so exactly agreed with that of the Chelsea pensioner, that I felt more strongly convinced than ever that the Taunton and Forty-hill robbers were the same persons. I was granted leave to see Amos Dyke privately, but I could make nothing of him. He had sunk into a state of religious despondency—had arrived, by what process of reasoning I could not comprehend, that, though innocent of the death of Mary Carter and the robbery at Vale Lodge as an unweaned babe—had arrived, I say, at the comfortable conclusion that he was predoomed, born to be hanged, and that it was consequently folly, if not worse, to attempt reversing a sentence decreed by the Eternal One. I had not patience with such intolerable and, as it seemed to me, blasphemous cant, and left him in very bad humour, half reconciled to see him perish for a crime of which, if it could have been of any avail, I would have

sworn with a safe conscience he was guiltless.

That unjust feeling on my part did not last long. I was loth to quit Taunton, and thereby tacitly acknowledge to my superiors that I, too, had given up all hope of unravelling the Vale Lodge mystery, if mystery there were. The next day was Sunday, and in the afternoon I took a long stroll in the fields about Taunton. When near Harry Hill's well, as it is called, with the water of which Stogumber ale is brewed, I was overtaken by a violent shower of rain. The nearest shelter was a cottage of a somewhat superior class, in which I sought, and was civilly granted, shelter. The tenant, a hale, respectable mechanic in appearance, whose age might be sixty-five, was cosily smoking a pipe by the fire, and moistening his clay with a tankard of ale standing on the table before him, which he hospitably invited me to partake of. Casting my eyes round the room, I fairly leapt from the chair as my glance rested upon a rude but wonderfully life-like portrait in a narrow black frame. It was the likeness, the unmistakeable likeness, of Roberts, landlord of the Magpie and Stump.

"I know the original of this portrait," said I, touching the frame with my stick, "well by sight."

"Then," said the old man, "you know by sight, and I hope you'll never know him anyhow else, one of the biggest villains that ever walked the earth. He keeps a public-house now, I hear, somewhere in London, and flashes his money about in style." He added, "Well, we shall see what he comes to in the end. He goes by the name of Roberts, my son, who took this picture of him by the sly, says; but his real name is Stokes, wicked Dick Stokes we used to call him. A real bad un, stock and lock, depend upon it, sir."

"Is he a native of these parts?"

"I am sorry to say he is. However, Taunton couldn't help that. I seed him," added my host, with a chuckling laugh, "whipped through the town at the cart's tail when he was only seventeen years old—that must be more than twenty years ago. In addition to which whipping," added the old man, "he got a year's treadmill. Served him right—too good for the young villain!"

"What may have been the crime he was convicted of?"

"Knocking down a poor old woman

who was returning from market, and robbing her of seven shilling and nine pence, all she had in the world. Jane Sims was her name."

"Then he richly deserved his punishment."

"That *is* right. I mind the trial as if it was but yesterday. Ah, and he'd have got out of it, for his counsellor—such villains as he can always somehow get counsellors—so bothered the old woman that she was afraid at last to swear down-right positive it was he. But the counsellor couldn't bamboozle young Amos Dyke. No, no, Amos cooked the scoundrel's goose nicely for him."

"What *do* you say?" I exclaimed, springing in a manner involuntarily to my feet.

"Bless me, how you startle a body! What do I say? why, that if it hadn't been for young Amos Dyke, Richard Stokes would have got clear off—everybody knows that. For my part, I never thought Amos Dyke's life was safe after the young villain was out of gaol till he left the place, about four years, as I reckon, afterwards."

"Do you mean the Amos Dyke that's now in prison for the Vale Lodge affair?"

"Certainly I do. There's no other Amos Dyke that I ever heard of. As to Amos having murdered Mary Carter and carried off the plate, I wouldn't believe it if every man and woman in Taunton were to swear they seed him do it till they were all black in the face. No, sir; there's some mystery about that business which I pray God will clear up in time."

The rain was over; I heartily thanked the old man, bade him good-bye, and almost rushed out of the house. I wanted to be alone to arrange and weigh the thoughts thronging in my brain. Why, good heavens! the whole thing was presently clear to me as daylight. That fellow calling himself John Williams, whom Roberts, *alias* Stokes, chased and gave into custody for robbing him of a gold watch and chain, had one of his upper front teeth broken, as both the Chelsea pensioner and Richard Ray declared the burglar had. No whiskers, and jet black hair—tut, dyed, of course; why, what a blind dolt I must have been. The net was closing round the villains, and that pretty dodge was had recourse to in order to get "John Williams" safely away to some place where no one would dream of looking for him; perhaps, also, lest, to save himself, he might turn round upon

Roberts—that is Stokes. Clever, but caught, please God, in their own trap! The diabolical scoundrel! After twenty years, to endeavour to glut his revenge by the safe assassination of Amos Dyke. Thank Goodness, his murderous design would be balked—the poisoned chalice commended to his own lips.—Huzza!

Something after this manner I mentally ranted on, as I strode at a rapid pace towards Vale Lodge.

“Richard Ray,” said I, after a few minutes’ conversation with Mrs. Searle—“Richard Ray, my fine lad, put two or three shirts in a bundle, then get the head of the three-prong fork you dug into the burglar’s posteriors—the prongs must have left their mark, eh?”

“I warrant they did.”

“To be sure. Well, bring the fork head—not the handle, you know—and your bundle, we have a long journey before us, and must start at once.”

The credentials of which I was the bearer secured me the zealous co-operation of the authorities at Douglas. John Williams was, I found, still in gaol, and had not been tried; criminal process in the island being remarkably slow; and, from something Williams had been overheard to say to his wife—or at least a woman that passed for his wife—it was supposed the prosecutor would not appear against him. The woman had, moreover, when in liquor, let fall expressions which implied that the prosecutor, Roberts, was in her husband’s power, and that if he didn’t mind what he was about, and release Williams from gaol pretty quick, he would find it out too.

I understood now perfectly, and proceeded at once with Ray to the prison room. At the sight of Ray, Williams turned as white as the paper upon which I am writing, gasped convulsively for breath, whilst his knees smote each other.

“Come along,” said the jailer: “this way; we are going to see what colour

soap and hot water will bring that hair of yours to.”

“And whether there are any marks,” said I, “in a certain place, which the points of these prongs will fit.”

“Mercy—mercy!” gasped the nerveless wretch, falling on his knees. “Mercy—mercy! I confess everything.”

“Very well; make a clean breast of it. If you can enable us to convict Roberts, alias Stokes, it is quite possible—though I promise nothing, mind—that you will be admitted evidence for the crown.”

“I will—I can—I will gladly do it.”

A desperate, resolved villain was Roberts, alias Stokes. He was busy behind the bar of the Magpie and Stump when I, with half-a-dozen brother officers, accompanied by Williams, entered the house. The moment his eye fell upon us, he staggered back, turning deathly white, as from the stroke of a dagger. Thinking all was over with him, he roused himself by a desperate effort, rushed towards the end of the bar, pulled out a drawer, snatched up a small bottle, and the next moment would have been a corpse, but that one of our fellows sprang at a leap over the counter, and struck the phial out of his hand. It was filled with prussic acid, kept in readiness to serve in such a catastrophe as had at last overtaken him.

Nearly the whole of the plate carried off from Vale Lodge, St. Alban’s, and Walthamstow, with much more besides, was found concealed in different parts of the house. Stokes had not for some time had an opportunity of safely disposing of his plunder.

Richard Stokes was hanged at Taunton, in sight of a prodigious number of spectators, not very long after the unfortunate Amos Dyke had been liberated “without a stain on his character.” He left that part of England, and I have never since heard of him. Those who knew him best, said he took the death of poor Mary Carter greatly to heart.

FABLES, ANCIENT AND MODERN,

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED INTO RHYME AND BLANK VERSE FROM GREEK, LATIN,
FRENCH, SPANISH, AND ITALIAN WRITERS, BY GEORGE BURGES, A.M., AND
MISS M. A. STODART.

To which are added a few from the German.

FABLE XXIII.—THE OAK AND REED.

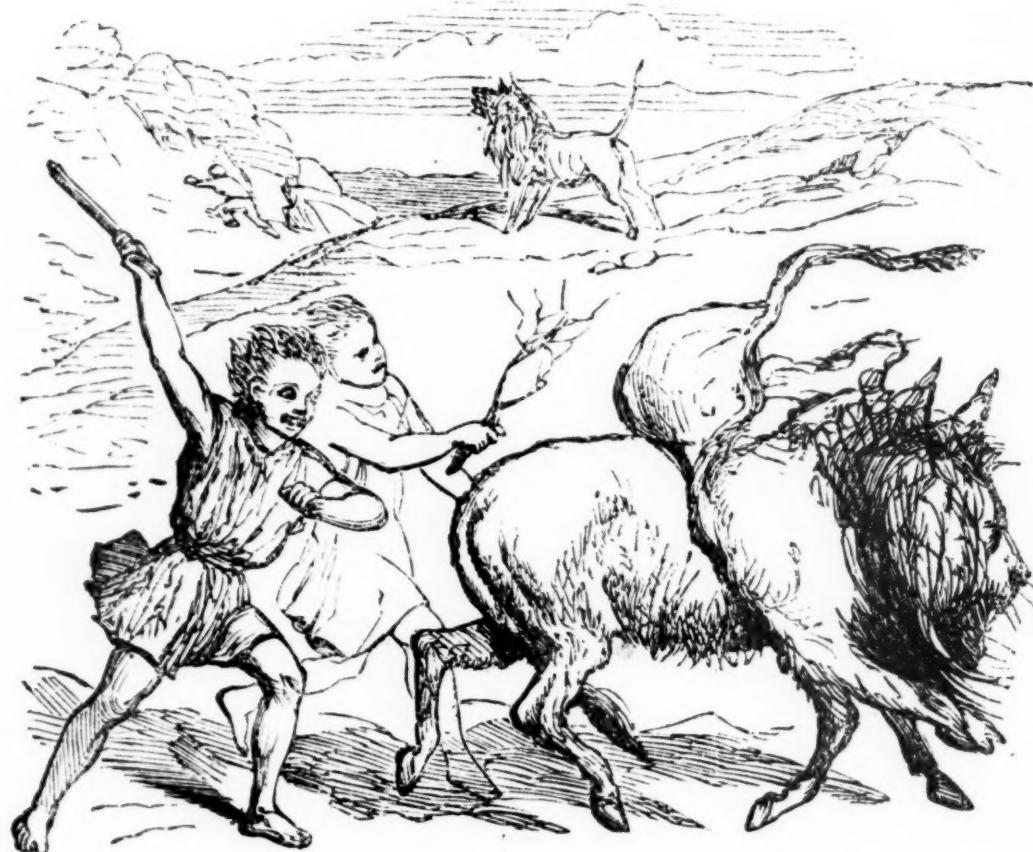
NEAR to a stream an oak had grown
Of old, and neighbour reed had known,
When challenge to the reed the oak
Gave, and in lofty language spoke :
“ Of all ‘mongst trees that hold a place,
Oak is the pride ; the reed disgrace ! ”
The humble reed no angry word
Gave in reply—but merely heard.
When from its seat, with roots upturn,
The oak was by a whirlwind borne
Into the neighb’ring stream, whose wave
The oak’s bare roots was seen to lave ;
There in a wood of reeds stuck fast
The giant growth of ages past.
Much the oak marvell’d how, with form
So slight, a reed could ‘gainst the storm
Hold out ; while it, with roots that long
And deep in earth were fix’d, and strong
Seem’d to the eye, had been thrown down.
Then mildly spake the reed,—“ The frown
Of thought dismiss, nor wonder show.
Thou, fighting ‘gainst the storm, the blow
Of fate hast felt, and vanquish’d been ;
While we, with gentler thoughts, are seen
To bend ; and e’en our tops to move
The slightest breath its pow’r will prove.
‘Tis his to yield, whose strength is slight,
Not ‘gainst the pow’rful to fight.”

FABLE XXIV.—THE HORSE AND MAN.

A HORSE, not yet broke in, had known no bit,
Nor on his back had dar’d a man to sit ;
But when a wild boar did him grievous hurt,
By scatt’ring on the grass he grazed on, dirt,
And making the lake muddy, where a bath
He used to take, he was stirr’d up to wrath.
But as he wanted of himself the might
His cause to avenge, there came a man in sight,
To whom he told his wrongs, and bade him say
If he could make the boar for ill deeds pay ?
“ This,” when the man said “ I can do,” with joy,
Horse made alliance with his friend to annoy
His foe with succour brought ; nor did he see
How of a double-dealer he would be
A simple-minded victim. Said the man,
“ To carry out successfully the plan
I have in view, you must assistance lend,
And do what for your good requires your friend.”
Assent horse gave. When said the man, “ You know
On foot the boar I cannot overthrow ;

But if a rein you will receive, and bear
 Me seated on your back, and feel no fear
 Yourself to give up, so that I can turn
 Or stop your running, your complaints to spurn,
 The boar will dare no more; but quickly know
 How fatal is of horse and man the blow.”
 Sense-blind with passion, horse gave all the aid
 The man required. But when the boar repaid
 His wrongs by death, horse, broke in, tried in vain
 The rein and rider to throw off again;
 And taking from fresh rider’s curb the law,
 The pleasant pasture never more he saw,
 But stood in stable, dry food forc’d to take,
 Deprived alike of freedom, grass, and lake.
 “Just is my fate,” then horse said. “Hence I’m taught
 Love of revenge has on me slavery brought.”

FABLE XXV.—THE ASS IN A LION’S SKIN, AND FOX.



AN ass, 'tis said, at Kyma once was bred,
 Of largest size; who wishing much a dread,
 Like lion, to produce; when found its skin
 Was, by some chance, he put his limbs within;
 And, by conceit from outward garb betray'd
 In mind, he, like the lion, loudly bray'd,
 Who had much mischief late to farmers done.
 Men, in great fear, and sheep and cattle run;
 But as a brisk wind blew, and threw aside
 The lion's skin, and show'd of ass the hide,
 Boys ran towards him, and with cudgels beat
 The beast, and from him took away conceit
 And likewise lion's skin. But when the bones
 Of ass fox saw well cudgell'd, and the moans
 Heard loud and long—“Of thee I, too, afraid
 Had been, like all the rest, friend ass,” he said,
 “Had I not known that thou, at Kyma born,
 Would with thy bray not fear produce, but scorn.”

FABLE XXVI.—THE EAGLE AND CROW.

FROM a high cliff an eagle swooping came :
 Bore off a lamb, and feasted on the same
 With her young brood. The feat was seen by crow,
 Who, envious, wish'd an equal deed to show.
 Down on a ram it rush'd with whirring din—
 Thick was the wool; its claws stuck fast therein.
 It could not rise, but stood with fluttering wing,
 'Til shepherd ran and caught the hapless thing :
 And, its feathers clipping—home at ev'ning brought,
 A present to his boys; who eager sought,
 What bird it was. "My boys," he said, "here see
 A crow, who eagle deem'd itself to be."—M. A. S.

FABLE XXVII.—THE BOY CATCHING LOCUSTS AND SCORPION.

UNDER a wall a boy had locusts caught ;
 Where finding scorpion, he to catch it thought ;
 And, his hand hollow making, on it threw
 Himself ; when scorpion, who his object knew,
 Its sting erecting, to the silly boy
 Says—"Go away, and do not me annoy.
 As yet you are unhurt ; but know my sting,
 If your hands touch me, death on thee will bring, }
 And what thy bosom holds away thou'l fling." }
 The fable this declares—It is not meet
 In the same way the weak and strong to treat.

FABLE XXVIII.—THE LYING SHEPHERD BOY.

A BOY to pasture used a flock of sheep
 From village far to lead, and there to keep
 On higher ground his charge ; but fond of fun,
 As if a wolf were near, he us'd to run,
 And to field-tillers who were near to cry—
 "Help ! help ! a wolf, who lambs will kill, I spy.
 The ploughmen, hearing this, their work leave off,
 To aid the lad, who pays them with a scoff.
 But when they found that twice and thrice the lad
 Play'd off this joke, they angry grew, and bade
 The boy look to himself alone for aid,
 For none they'd give. This had not long been said,
 When wolf did truly come ; and truly, too,
 Boy bawl'd for help. But nothing would they do.
 When wolf, nought fearing from a shepherd boy,
 Did of the liar the whole flock destroy.

FABLE XXIX.—THE HARE AND TORTOISE.

A HARE was making of a tortoise fun,
 Who said—"Though slow I am, I will outrun
 Hare with his feet for fleetness so renowned."
 "This," said the Hare, "will but in words be found."
 "A contest make, then," tortoise said ; "thou'l know
 Who in the race quick-footed is, who slow ;

And let us reynard as the umpire take,
 Of beasts the cleverest, the line to make
 From whence we are to start, and whither run,
 And victor to proclaim when all is done.”
 Reynard, who happened to be near—for peace
 The previous war 'twixt beasts had caus'd to cease—
 Laws for the race impartially laid ;
 And the straight course was best for both, he said.
 Well, from the start they got off, but with pace
 Went on unequal. Hare to win the race
 Deeming himself quite sure—for how, with feet
 So slow could tortoise equal him so fleet ?—
 In the path laid him down and sleep enjoyed,
 Regardless of the prize. Not so employ'd
 Was tortoise, but went steady on and slow—
 For well she did her want of fleetness know—
 Till winning-post she reach'd, where when hare came,
 Rous'd from her nap and running hard, the game
 He found was lost ; the slow had beat the fleet,
 And fox had giv'n the prize to whom 'twas meet.

FABLE XXX.—THE AMARANTH AND ROSE.

AN amaranth beside a rose-tree grew ;
 And said, “ How lovely, rose, thou art to view ;
 For beauty and sweet scent alike caress'd
 By gods and men ; fair rose, I deem thee bless'd.”
 The rose replied, “ Short, Amaranth, is my hour,
 E'en if none pluck me, quicky fades my flow'r.
 But thou art always young, a changeless gem,
 Springing from out a never-dying stem.”—M. A. S.

FABLE XXXI.—THE CAPTURED TRUMPETER.

A TRUMPETER, while calling all around
 The troops dispers'd with clarion's piercing sound,
 Was taken by the foe ; when with the breath
 Of suppliant thus he begg'd t' escape from death.
 “ A man of mildest manners do not kill ;
 The blood of none do I in battle spill,
 Nor weapons carry ; this brass-sounding thing
 Is all that I to hostile conflicts bring.”
 “ For thee to die,” said they, “ there's reason right :
 Since thou, unwilling arms to wield in fight,
 Dost others to the deeds of death excite.”

FABLE XXXII.—THE EAGLE KILLED BY ITS OWN FEATHERS.

On a high rock an eagle sate, with beak
 Tearing a hare, its prey ; when, sport to seek,
 Below an archer came, and arrow drew ;
 Quick flew the feather'd dart with aim so true,
 That through the body of the bird it made
 Its passage ; only the notch'd end was stay'd ;
 Where, when the feathers, fix'd on shaft, were seen
 Before the eagle's eyes,—“ This death, I ween,”
 He said, “ of all deaths brings the greatest pain,
 To find myself by my own pinions slain.”

LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.

By the Author of "LADY LISLE," "AURORA FLOYD," &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

TROUBLED DREAMS.

ROBERT AUDLEY left Southampton by the mail, and let himself into his chambers just as the dawn was creeping cold and grey into the solitary rooms, and the canaries were beginning to rustle their feathers feebly in the early morning.

There were several letters in the box behind the door, but there was none from George Talboys.

The young barrister was worn out by a long day spent in hurrying from place to place. The usual lazy monotony of his life had been broken as it had never been broken before in eight-and-twenty tranquil, easy-going years. His mind was beginning to grow confused upon the point of time. It seemed to him months since he had lost sight of George Talboys. It was so difficult to believe that it was less than forty-eight hours ago that the young man had left him asleep under the willows by the trout stream.

His eyes were painfully weary for want of sleep. He searched about the room for some time, looking in all sorts of impossible places for a letter from George Talboys, and then threw himself dressed upon his friend's bed, in the room with the canaries and geraniums.

"I shall wait for to-morrow morning's post," he said; "and if that brings no letter from George, I shall start for Liverpool without a moment's delay."

He was thoroughly exhausted, and fell into a heavy sleep—a sleep which was profound without being in any way refreshing, for he was tormented all the time by disagreeable dreams—dreams which were painful, not from any horror in themselves, but from a vague and wearying sense of their confusion and absurdity.

At one time he was pursuing strange people and entering strange houses in the endeavour to unravel the mystery of the telegraphic dispatch; at another time he was in the churchyard at Ventnor, gazing at the headstone George had ordered for the grave of his dead wife. Once in the long rambling mystery of these dreams he went to the grave, and found this head-

stone gone, and on remonstrating with the stonemason, was told that the man had a reason for removing the inscription; a reason that Robert would some day learn.

In another dream he saw the grave of Helen Talboys open, and while he waited, with the cold horror lifting up his hair, to see the dead woman arise and stand before him with her stiff, charnel-house drapery clinging about her frigid limbs, his uncle's wife tripped gaily out of the open grave, dressed in the crimson velvet robes in which the artist had painted her, and with her ringlets flashing like red gold in the unearthly light that shone about her.

But into all these dreams the places he had last been in, and the people with whom he had last been concerned, were dimly interwoven—sometimes his uncle; sometimes Alicia; oftenest of all my lady; the trout stream in Essex; the lime-walk at the Court. Once he was walking in the black shadows of this long avenue, with Lady Audley hanging on his arm, when suddenly they heard a great knocking in the distance, and his uncle's wife wound her slender arms about him, crying out that it was the day of judgment, and that all wicked secrets must now be told. Looking at her as she shrieked this in his ear, he saw that her face had grown ghastly white, and that her beautiful golden ringlets were changing into serpents, and slowly creeping down her fair neck.

He started from this dream to find that there was some one really knocking at the outer door of his chambers.

It was a dreary, wet morning, the rain beating against the windows, and the canaries twittering dismally to each other—complaining, perhaps, of the bad weather. Robert could not tell how long the person had been knocking. He had mixed the sound with his dreams, and when he woke he was only half conscious of outer things.

"It's that stupid Mrs. Maloney, I dare say," he muttered. "She may knock again, for all I care. Why can't she use her duplicate key, instead of dragging a man out of bed when he's half dead with fatigue?"

The person, whoever it was, did knock again, and then desisted, apparently tired

out; but about a minute afterwards a key turned in the door.

"She had her key with her all the time, then," said Robert. "I'm very glad I didn't get up."

The door between the sitting-room and bed-room was half open, and he could see the laundress bustling about, dusting the furniture, and re-arranging things that had never been disarranged.

"Is that you, Mrs. Maloney?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir."

"Then why, in goodness' name, did you make that row at the door, when you had a key with you all the time?"

"A row at the door, Sir!"

"Yes; that infernal knocking."

"Sure I never knocked, Misther Audley, but walked straight in with my key—"

"Then who did knock? There's been some one kicking up a row at that door for a quarter of an hour, I should think; you must have met him going downstairs."

"But I'm rather late this morning, Sir, for I've been in Mr. Martin's rooms first, and I've come straight from the floor above."

"Then you didn't see any one at the door, or on the stairs?"

"Not a mortal soul, Sir."

"Was ever anything so provoking?" said Robert. "To think that I should have let this person go away without ascertaining who he was, or what he wanted! How do I know that it was not some one with a message or a letter from George Talboys?"

"Sure if it was, Sir, he'll come again," said Mrs. Maloney, soothingly.

"Yes, of course, if it was anything of consequence he'll come again," muttered Robert. The fact was, that from the moment of finding the telegraphic message at Southampton, all hope of hearing of George had faded out of his mind. He felt that there was some mystery involved in the disappearance of his friend—some treachery towards himself, or towards George. What if the young man's greedy old father-in-law had tried to separate them on account of the monetary trust lodged in Robert Audley's hands? Or what if, since even in these civilized days all kinds of unsuspected horrors are constantly committed—what if the old man had decoyed George down to Southampton, and made away with him in order to get possession of that £20,000,

left in Robert's custody for little Georgey's use?

But neither of these suppositions explained the telegraphic message, and it was the telegraphic message which had filled Robert's mind with a vague sense of alarm. The postman brought no letter from George Talboys, and the person who had knocked at the door of the chambers did not return between seven and nine o'clock, so Robert Audley left Fig-tree Court once more in search of his friend. This time he told the cabman to drive to the Euston Station, and in twenty minutes he was on the platform, making inquiries about the trains.

The Liverpool express had started half an hour before he reached the station, and he had to wait an hour and a quarter for a slow train to take him to his destination.

Robert Audley chafed cruelly at this delay. Half a dozen vessels might sail for Australia while he roamed up and down the long platform, tumbling over trucks and porters, and swearing at his ill-luck.

He bought the *Times* newspaper, and looked instinctively at the second column, with a morbid interest in the advertisements of people missing—sons, brothers, and husbands who had left their homes, never to return or to be heard of more.

There was one advertisement of a young man found drowned somewhere on the Lambeth shore.

What if that should have been George's fate? No; the telegraphic message involved his father-in-law in the fact of his disappearance, and every speculation about him must start from that one point.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when Robert got into Liverpool; too late for anything except to make inquiries as to what vessels had sailed within the last two days for the antipodes.

An emigrant ship had sailed at four o'clock that afternoon—the *Victoria Regia*, bound for Melbourne.

The result of his inquiries amounted to this—if he wanted to find out who had sailed in the *Victoria Regia*, he must wait till the next morning, and apply for information of that vessel.

Robert Audley was at the office at nine o'clock the next morning, and was the first person, after the clerks, who entered it.

He met with every civility from the clerk to whom he applied. The young man referred to his books, and running

his pen down the list of passengers who had sailed in the *Victoria Regia*, told Robert that there was no one amongst them of the name of Talboys. He pushed his inquiries further. Had any of the passengers entered their names within a short time of the vessel's sailing?

One of the other clerks looked up from his desk as Robert asked this question. Yes, he said; he remembered a young man's coming into the office at half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, and paying his passage money. His name was the last on the list—Thomas Brown.

Robert Audley shrugged his shoulders. There could have been no possible reason for George's taking a feigned name. He asked the clerk who had last spoken if he could remember the appearance of this Mr. Thomas Brown.

No; the office was crowded at the time; people were running in and out, and he had not taken any particular notice of this last passenger.

Robert thanked them for their civility, and wished them good morning. As he was leaving the office, one of the young men called after him :

"Oh, by-the-bye, sir," he said, "I remember one thing about this Mr. Thomas Brown—his arm was in a sling."

There was nothing more for Robert Audley to do but to return to town. He re-entered his chambers at six o'clock that evening, thoroughly worn out once more with his useless search.

Mrs. Maloney brought him his dinner and a pint of wine from a tavern in the Strand. The evening was raw and chilly, and the laundress had lighted a good fire in the sitting-room grate.

After eating about half a mutton-chop, Robert sat with his wine untasted upon the table before him, smoking cigars and staring into the blaze.

"George Talboys never sailed for Australia," he said, after long and painful reflection. "If he is alive, he is still in England; and if he is dead, his body is hidden in some corner of England."

He sat for hours smoking and thinking—troubled and gloomy thoughts leaving a dark shadow upon his moody face, which neither the brilliant light of the gas nor the red blaze of the fire could dispel.

Very late in the evening he rose from his chair, pushed away the table, wheeled his desk over to the fireplace, took out a sheet of foolscap, and dipped a pen in the ink.

But after doing this he paused, leaned

his forehead upon his hand, and once more relapsed into thought.

"I shall draw up a record of all that has occurred between our going down to Essex and to-night, beginning at the very beginning."

He drew up this record in short, detached sentences, which he numbered as he wrote.

It ran thus:—

"JOURNAL OF FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE TALBOYS, INCLUSIVE OF FACTS WHICH HAVE NO APPARENT RELATION TO THAT CIRCUMSTANCE."

In spite of the troubled state of his mind, he was rather inclined to be proud of the official appearance of this heading. He sat for some time looking at it with affection, and with the feather of his pen in his mouth. "Upon my word," he said, "I begin to think that I ought to have pursued my profession, instead of dawdling my life away as I have done."

He smoked half a cigar before he had got his thoughts in proper train, and then began to write:—

"1. I write to Alicia, proposing to take George down to the Court.

"2. Alicia writes, objecting to the visit, on the part of Lady Audley.

"3. We go to Essex in spite of this objection. I see my lady. My lady refuses to be introduced to George that particular evening on the score of fatigue.

"4. Sir Michael invites George and me to dinner for the following evening.

"5. My lady receives a telegraphic dispatch the next morning which summons her to London.

"6. Alicia shows me a letter from my lady, in which she requests to be told when I and my friend Mr. Talboys mean to leave Essex. To this letter is subjoined a postscript, reiterating the above request.

"7. We call at the Court, and ask to see the house. My lady's apartments are locked.

"8. We get at the aforesaid apartments by means of a secret passage, the existence of which is unknown to my lady. In one of the rooms we find her portrait.

"9. George is frightened at the storm. His conduct is exceedingly strange for the rest of the evening.

"10. George quite himself again the following morning. I propose leaving Audley Court immediately; he prefers remaining till the evening.

"11. We go out fishing. George leaves me to go to the Court.

"12. The last positive information I can obtain of him in Essex is at the Court, where the servant says he thinks Mr. Talboys told him he would go and look for my lady in the grounds.

"13. I receive information about him at the station which may, or may not, be correct.

"14. I hear of him positively once more at Southampton, where, according to his father-in-law, he had been for an hour on the previous night.

"15. The telegraphic message."

When Robert Audley had completed this brief record, which he drew up with great deliberation, and with frequent pauses for reflection, alterations, and erasures, he sat for a long time contemplating the written page.

At last he read it carefully over, stopping at some of the numbered paragraphs, and marking some of them with a pencilled cross; then he folded the sheet of foolscap, went over to a cabinet on the opposite side of the room, unlocked it, and placed the paper in that very pigeon-hole into which he had thrust Alicia's letter—the pigeon-hole marked *Important*.

Having done this, he returned to his easy-chair by the fire, pushed away his desk, and lighted a cigar. "It's as dark as midnight from first to last," he said; "and the clue to the mystery must be found either at Southampton or in Essex. Be it how it may, my mind is made up. I shall first go to Audley Court, and look for George Talboys in a narrow radius."

CHAPTER XIV.

PHÆBEBE'S SUITOR.

"MR. GEORGE TALBOYS.—Any person who has met this gentleman since the 7th inst., or who possesses any information respecting him subsequent to that date, will be liberally rewarded on communicating with A. Z., 14, Chancery-lane."

Sir Michael Audley read the above advertisement in the second column of the *Times*, as he sat at breakfast with my lady and Alicia two or three days after Robert's return to town.

"Robert's friend has not yet been heard of, then," said the baronet, after reading the advertisement to his wife and daughter.

"As for that," replied my lady, "I cannot help wondering that any one can be silly enough to advertise for him. The

young man was evidently of a restless, roving disposition—a sort of Bamfylde Moore Carew of modern life, whom no attraction could ever keep in one spot."

Though the advertisement appeared three successive times, the party at the Court attached very little importance to Mr. Talboys' disappearance; and after this one occasion his name was never again mentioned by either Sir Michael, my lady, or Alicia.

Alicia Audley and her pretty stepmother were by no means any better friends after that quiet evening on which the young barrister had dined at the Court.

"She is a vain, frivolous, heartless, little coquette," said Alicia, addressing herself to her Newfoundland dog Cæsar, who was the sole recipient of the young lady's confidences; "she is a practised and consummate flirt, Cæsar; and not contented with setting her yellow ringlets and her silly giggle at half the men in Essex, she must needs make that stupid cousin of mine dance attendance upon her. I haven't common patience with her."

In proof of which last assertion Miss Alicia Audley treated her stepmother with such very palpable impertinence that Sir Michael felt himself called upon to remonstrate with his only daughter.

"The poor little woman is very sensitive, you know, Alicia," the Baronet said, gravely, "and she feels your conduct most acutely."

"I don't believe it a bit, papa," answered Alicia, stoutly. "You think her sensitive because she has soft little white hands, and big blue eyes with long lashes, and all manner of affected, fantastical ways, which you stupid men call fascinating. Sensitive! Why, I've seen her do cruel things with those slender white fingers, and laugh at the pain she inflicted. I'm very sorry, papa," she added, softened a little by her father's look of distress; "though she has come between us, and robbed poor Alicia of the love of that dear, generous heart, I wish I could like her for your sake; but I can't, I can't, and no more can Cæsar. She came up to him once with her red lips apart, and her little white teeth glistening between them, and stroked his great head with her soft hand; but if I had not had hold of his collar, he would have flown at her throat and strangled her. She may bewitch every man in Essex, but she'd never make friends with my dog."

"Your dog shall be shot," answered Sir Michael, angrily, "if his vicious temper ever endangers Lucy."

The Newfoundland rolled his eyes slowly round in the direction of the speaker, as if he understood every word that had been said. Lady Audley happened to enter the room at this very moment, and the animal cowered down by the side of his mistress with a suppressed growl. There was something in the manner of the dog which was, if anything, more indicative of terror than of fury; incredible as it appears that Cæsar should be frightened by so fragile a creature as Lucy Audley.

Amiable as was my lady's nature, she could not live long at the Court without discovering Alicia's dislike to her. She never alluded to it but once; then, shrugging her graceful white shoulders, she said, with a sigh:

"It seems very hard that you cannot love me, Alicia, for I have never been used to make enemies; but since it seems that it must be so, I cannot help it. If we cannot be friends, let us at least be neutral. You won't try to injure me?"

"Injure you!" exclaimed Alicia; "how should I injure you?"

"You'll not try to deprive me of your father's affection?"

"I may not be as amiable as you are, my lady, and I may not have the same sweet smiles and pretty words for every stranger I meet, but I am not capable of a contemptible meanness; and even if I were, I think you are so secure of my father's love, that nothing but your own act will ever deprive you of it."

"What a severe creature you are, Alicia!" said my lady, making a little grimace. "I suppose you mean to infer by all that, that I'm deceitful. Why, I can't help smiling at people, and speaking prettily to them. I know I'm no *better* than the rest of the world, but I can't help it if I'm *pleasanter*. It's constitutional."

Alicia having thus entirely shut the door upon all intimacy between Lady Audley and herself, and Sir Michael being chiefly occupied in agricultural pursuits and manly sports, which kept him away from home, it was perhaps only natural that my lady, being of an eminently social disposition, should find herself thrown a good deal upon her white-eyelashed maid for society.

Phœbe Marks was exactly the sort of girl who is generally promoted from the

post of lady's maid to that of companion. She had just sufficient education to enable her to understand her mistress when Lucy chose to allow herself to run riot in a species of intellectual tarantella, in which her tongue went mad to the sound of its own rattle, as the Spanish dancer at the noise of his castanets. Phœbe knew enough of the French language to be able to dip into the yellow-paper-covered novels which my lady ordered from the Burlington Arcade, and to discourse with her mistress upon the questionable subjects of those romances. The likeness which the lady's-maid bore to Lucy Audley was, perhaps, a point of sympathy between the two women. It was not to be called a striking likeness; a stranger might have seen them both together, and yet have failed to remark it. But there were certain dim and shadowy lights in which, meeting Phœbe Marks gliding softly through the dark oak passages of the Court, or under the shrouded avenues in the garden, you might have easily mistaken her for my lady.

Sharp October winds were sweeping the leaves from the limes in the long avenue, and driving them in withered heaps with a ghostly rustling noise along the dry gravel walks. The old well must have been half choked up with the leaves that drifted about it, and whirled in eddying circles into its black, broken mouth. On the still bosom of the fish-pond the same withered leaves slowly rotted away, mixing themselves with the tangled weeds that discoloured the surface of the water. All the gardeners Sir Michael could employ could not keep the impress of autumn's destroying hand from the grounds about the Court.

"How I hate this desolate month!" my lady said, as she walked about the garden, shivering beneath her sable mantle. "Everything dropping to ruin and decay, and the cold flicker of the sun lighting up the ugliness of the earth, as the glare of gas-lamps lights the wrinkles of an old woman. Shall I ever grow old, Phœbe? Will my hair ever drop off as the leaves are falling from those trees, and leave me wan and bare like them? What is to become of me when I grow old?"

She shivered at the thought of this more than she had done at the cold wintry breeze, and muffling herself closely in her fur, walked so fast that her maid had some difficulty in keeping up with her.

"Do you remember, Phœbe," she said, presently, relaxing her pace, "do you re-

member that French story we read—the story of a beautiful woman who committed some crime—I forget what—in the zenith of her power and loveliness, when all Paris drank to her every night, and when the people ran away from the carriage of the king to flock about hers, and get a peep at her face? Do you remember how she kept the secret of what she had done for nearly half a century, spending her old age in her family château, beloved and honoured by all the province as an uncanonized saint and benefactress to the poor; and how, when her hair was white, and her eyes almost blind with age, the secret was revealed through one of those strange accidents by which such secrets always are revealed in romances, and she was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be burned alive? The king who had worn her colours was dead and gone; the court of which she had been the star had passed away; powerful functionaries and great magistrates, who might perhaps have helped her, were moulderling in their graves; brave young cavaliers, who would have died for her, had fallen upon distant battle-fields; she had lived to see the age to which she had belonged fade like a dream; and she went to the stake, followed only by a few ignorant country people, who forgot all her bounties, and hooted at her for a wicked sorceress."

"I don't care for such dismal stories, my lady," said Phœbe Marks with a shudder. "One has no need to read books to give one the horrors in this dull place."

Lady Audley shrugged her shoulders and laughed at her maid's candour.

"It is a dull place, Phœbe," she said, "though it doesn't do to say so to my dear old husband. Though I am the wife of one of the most influential men in the county, I don't know that I wasn't nearly as well off at Mr. Dawson's; and yet it's something to wear sables that cost sixty guineas, and have a thousand pounds spent on the decoration of one's apartments."

Treated as a companion by her mistress, in the receipt of the most liberal wages, and with perquisites such as perhaps lady's-maid never had before, it was strange that Phœbe Marks should wish to leave her situation; but it was not the less a fact that she was anxious to exchange all the advantages of Audley Court for the very unpromising prospect which awaited her as the wife of her cousin Luke.

The young man had contrived in some

manner to associate himself with the improved fortunes of his sweetheart. He had never allowed Phœbe any peace till she had obtained for him, by the aid of my lady's interference, a situation as under-groom of the Court.

He never rode out with either Alicia or Sir Michael; but on one of the few occasions upon which my lady mounted the pretty little grey thoroughbred reserved for her use, he contrived to attend her in her ride. He saw enough, in the very first half hour they were out, to discover that, graceful as Lucy Audley might look in her long blue cloth habit, she was a timid horsewoman, and utterly unable to manage the animal she rode.

Lady Audley remonstrated with her maid upon her folly in wishing to marry the uncouth groom.

The two women were seated together over the fire in my lady's dressing-room, the grey sky closing in upon the October afternoon, and the black tracery of ivy darkening the casement windows.

"You surely are not in love with the awkward, ugly creature, are you, Phœbe?" asked my lady sharply.

The girl was sitting on a low stool at her mistress's feet. She did not answer my lady's question immediately, but sat for some time looking vacantly into the red abyss in the hollow fire.

Presently she said, rather as if she had been thinking aloud than answering Lucy's question—

"I don't think I can love him. We have been together from children, and I promised, when I was little better than fifteen, that I'd be his wife. I daren't break that promise now. There have been times when I've made up the very sentence I meant to say to him, telling him that I couldn't keep my faith with him; but the words have died upon my lips, and I've sat looking at him, with a choking sensation in my throat that wouldn't let me speak. I daren't refuse to marry him. I've often watched and watched him, as he has sat slicing away at a hedge-stake with his great clasp-knife, till I have thought that it is just such men as he who have decoyed their sweethearts into lonely places, and murdered them for being false to their word. When he was a boy he was always violent and revengeful. I saw him once take up that very knife in a quarrel with his mother. I tell you, my lady, I must marry him."

"You silly girl, you shall do nothing

of the kind!" answered Lucy. "You think he'll murder you, do you? Do you think, then, if murder is in him, you would be any safer as his wife? If you thwarted him, or made him jealous; if he wanted to marry another woman, or to get hold of some poor, pitiful bit of money of yours, couldn't he murder you then? I tell you you shan't marry him, Phœbe. In the first place, I hate the man; and, in the next place, I can't afford to part with you. We'll give him a few pounds and send him about his business."

Phœbe Marks caught my lady's hands in hers, and clasped them convulsively.

"My lady—my good, kind mistress!" she cried vehemently, "don't try to thwart me in this—don't ask me to thwart him. I tell you I must marry him. You don't know what he is. It will be my ruin, and the ruin of others, if I break my word. I must marry him!"

"Very well, then, Phœbe," answered her mistress, "I can't oppose you. There must be some secret at the bottom of all this."

"There is, my lady," said the girl, with her face turned away from Lucy.

"I shall be very sorry to lose you; but I have promised to stand your friend in all things. What does your cousin mean to do for a living when you are married?"

"He would like to take a public-house."

"Then he shall take a public-house, and the sooner he drinks himself to death the better. Sir Michael dines at a bachelor's party at Major Margrave's this evening, and my step-daughter is away with her friends at the Grange. You can bring your cousin into the drawing-room after dinner, and I'll tell him what I mean to do for him."

"You are very good, my lady," Phœbe answered with a sigh.

Lady Audley sat in the glow of fire-light and wax candles in the luxurious drawing-room; the amberdamask cushions of the sofa contrasting with her dark violet velvet dress, and her rippling hair falling about her neck in a golden haze. Everywhere around her were the evidences of wealth and splendour; while in strange contrast to all this, and to her own beauty, the awkward groom stood rubbing his bullet head as my lady explained to him what she meant to do for her confidential maid. Lucy's promises were very liberal, and she had expected that, uncouth as the man was, he would

in his own rough manner have expressed his gratitude.

To her surprise he stood staring at the floor without uttering a word in answer to her offer. Phœbe was standing close to his elbow, and seemed distressed at the man's rudeness.

"Tell my lady how thankful you are, Luke," she said.

"But I'm not so over and above thankful," answered her lover savagely. "Fifty pound aint much to start a public. You'll make it a hundred, my lady?"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Lady Audley, her clear blue eyes flashing with indignation, "and I wonder at your impertinence in asking it."

"Oh yes, you will, though," answered Luke, with quiet insolence that had a hidden meaning. "You'll make it a hundred, my lady."

Lady Audley rose from her seat, looked the man steadfastly in the face till his determined gaze sank under hers; then walking straight up to her maid, she said in a high, piercing voice, peculiar to her in moments of intense agitation, "Phœbe Marks, you have told *this man!*"

The girl fell on her knees at my lady's feet.

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me!" she cried. "He forced it from me, or I would never, never have told!"

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE WATCH.

UPON a lowering morning late in November, with the yellow fog low upon the flat meadows, and the blinded cattle groping their way through the dim obscurity, and blundering stupidly against black and leafless hedges, or stumbling into ditches, undistinguishable in the hazy atmosphere; with the village church looming brown and dingy through the uncertain light; with every winding path and cottage door, every gable-end and grey old chimney, every village child and straggling cur, seeming strange and weird of aspect in the semi-darkness, Phœbe Marks and her cousin Luke made their way through the churchyard of Audley, and presented themselves before a shivering curate, whose surplice hung in damp folds, soddened by the morning mist, and whose temper was not improved by his having waited five minutes for the bride and bridegroom.

Luke Marks, dressed in his ill-fitting Sunday clothes, looked by no means handsomer than in his every-day apparel; but Phœbe, arrayed in a rustling silk of delicate grey, that had been worn about half a dozen times by her mistress, looked, as the few spectators of the ceremony remarked, "quite the lady."

A very dim and shadowy lady; vague of outline, and faint of colouring; with eyes, hair, complexion, and dress all melting into such pale and uncertain shades that, in the obscure light of the foggy November morning, a superstitious stranger might have mistaken the bride for the ghost of some other bride, dead and buried in the vaults below the church.

Mr. Luke Marks, the hero of the occasion, thought very little of all this. He had secured the wife of his choice, and the object of his life-long ambition—a public-house. My lady had provided the seventy-five pounds necessary for the purchase of the goodwill and fixtures, with the stock of ales and spirits, of a small inn in the centre of a lonely little village, perched on the summit of a hill, and called Mount Stanning. It was not a very pretty house to look at; it had something of a tumble-down, weather-beaten appearance, standing as it did upon high ground, sheltered only by four or five bare and overgrown poplars, that had shot up too rapidly for their strength, and had a blighted, forlorn look in consequence. The wind had had its own way with the Castle Inn, and had sometimes made cruel use of its power. It was the wind that battered and bent the low, thatched roofs of out-houses and stables, till they hung over and lurched forward, as a slouched hat hangs over the low forehead of some village ruffian; it was the wind that shook and rattled the wooden shutters before the narrow casements, till they hung broken and dilapidated upon their rusty hinges; it was the wind that overthrew the pigeon-house, and broke the vane that had been impudently set up to tell the movements of its mightiness; it was the wind that made light of any little bit of wooden trellis-work, or creeping plant, or tiny balcony, or any modest decoration whatsoever, and tore and scattered it in its scornful fury; it was the wind that left mossy secretions on the discoloured surface of the plaster walls; it was the wind, in short, that shattered, and ruined, and rent, and trampled upon the tottering pile of buildings, and then flew shrieking off, to riot and glory in its

destroying strength. The dispirited proprietor grew tired of his long struggle with this mighty enemy; so the wind was left to work its own will, and the Castle Inn fell slowly to decay. But for all that it suffered without, it was not the less prosperous within doors. Sturdy drovers stopped to drink at the little bar; well-to-do farmers spent their evenings and talked politics in the low, wainscoted parlour, while their horses munched some suspicious mixture of mouldy hay and tolerable beans in the tumble-down stables. Sometimes even the members of the Audley hunt stopped to drink and bait their horses at the Castle Inn; while, on one grand and never-to-be-forgotten occasion, a dinner had been ordered by the master of the hounds for some thirty gentlemen, and the proprietor driven nearly mad by the importance of the demand.

So Luke Marks, who was by no means troubled with an eye for the beautiful, thought himself very fortunate in becoming landlord of the Castle Inn, Mount Stanning.

A chaise-cart was waiting in the fog to convey the bride and bridegroom to their new home; and a few of the simple villagers, who had known Phœbe from a child, were lingering round the church-yard gate to bid her good-bye. Her pale eyes were still paler from the tears she had shed, and the red rims which surrounded them. The bridegroom was annoyed at this exhibition of emotion.

"What are you blubbering for, lass?" he said, fiercely. "If you didn't want to marry me you should have told me so. I ain't going to murder you, am I?"

The lady's-maid shivered as he spoke to her, and dragged her little silk mantle closely round her.

"You're cold in all this here finery," said Luke, staring at her costly dress with no expression of good-will. "Why can't women dress according to their station? You won't have no silk gowns out of my pocket, I can tell you."

He lifted the shivering girl into the chaise, wrapped a rough great-coat about her, and drove off through the yellow fog, followed by a feeble cheer from two or three urchins clustered round the gate.

A new maid was brought from London to replace Phœbe Marks about the person of my lady—a very showy damsel, who wore a black satin gown, and rose-coloured ribbons in her cap, and complained bitterly of the dulness of Audley Court.

But Christmas brought visitors to the rambling old mansion. A country squire and his fat wife occupied the tapestry chamber; merry girls scampered up and down the long passages, and young men stared out of the latticed windows, watching for southerly winds and cloudy skies; there was not an empty stall in the roomy old stables; an extempore forge had been set up in the yard for the shoeing of hunters; yelping dogs made the place noisy with their perpetual clamour; strange servants herded together on the garret story; and every little casement hidden away under some pointed gable, and every dormer window in the quaint old roof, glimmered upon the winter's night with its separate taper, till, coming suddenly upon Audley Court, the benighted stranger, misled by the light, and noise, and bustle of the place, might have easily fallen into young Marlowe's error, and have mistaken the hospitable mansion for a good, old-fashioned inn, such as have faded from this earth since the last mail coach and prancing tits took their last melancholy journey to the knacker's yard.

Amongst other visitors Mr. Robert Audley came down to Essex for the hunting season, with half a dozen French novels, a case of cigars, and three pounds of Turkish tobacco in his portmanteau.

The honest young country squires, who talked all breakfast time of Flying Dutchman fillies and Voltigeur colts; of glorious runs of seven hours' hard riding over three counties, and a midnight homeward ride of thirty miles upon their covert hacks; and who ran away from the well-spread table with their mouths full of cold sirloin to look at that off pastern, or that sprained fore-arm, or the colt that had just come back from the veterinary surgeon's, set down Mr. Robert Audley, dawdling over a slice of bread and marmalade, as a person utterly unworthy of any remark whatsoever.

The young barrister had brought a couple of dogs with him; and the country gentleman who gave fifty pounds for a pointer, and travelled a couple of hundred miles to look at a leash of setters before he struck a bargain, laughed aloud at the two miserable curs, one of which had followed Robert Audley through Chancery Lane and half the length of Holborn; while his companion had been taken by the barrister *vi et armis* from a costermonger who was ill-using him. And as Robert furthermore insisted on having

these two deplorable animals under his easy-chair in the drawing-room, much to the annoyance of my lady, who, as we know, hated all dogs, the visitors at Audley Court looked upon the baronet's nephew as an inoffensive species of maniac.

During other visits to the Court Robert Audley had made a feeble show of joining in the sports of the merry assembly. He had jogged across half a dozen ploughed fields on a quiet grey pony of Sir Michael's, and drawing up breathless and panting at the door of some farm-house, had expressed his intention of following the hounds no further *that* morning. He had even gone so far as to put on, with great labour, a pair of skates, with a view to taking a turn on the frozen surface of the fish-pond, and had fallen ignominiously at the first attempt, lying placidly extended on the flat of his back until such time as the bystanders should think fit to pick him up. He had occupied the back seat in a dog-cart during a pleasant morning drive, vehemently protesting against being taken up hill, and requiring the vehicle to be stopped every ten minutes in order to readjust the cushions. But this year he showed no inclination for any of these outdoor amusements, and he spent his time entirely in lounging in the drawing-room, and making himself agreeable, after his own lazy fashion, to my lady and Alicia.

Lady Audley received her nephew's attentions in that graceful, half-childish fashion which her admirers found so charming; but Alicia was indignant at the change in her cousin's conduct.

"You were always a poor, spiritless fellow, Bob," said the young lady contemptuously, as she bounced into the drawing-room in her riding-habit, after a hunting breakfast, from which Robert had absented himself, preferring a cup of tea in my lady's boudoir; "but this year I don't know what has come to you. You are good for nothing but to hold a skein of silk or read Tennyson to Lady Audley."

"My dear, hasty, impetuous Alicia, don't be violent," said the young man, imploringly. "A conclusion isn't a five-barred gate; and you needn't give your judgment its head, as you give your mare Atalanta hers, when you're flying across country at the heels of an unfortunate fox. Lady Audley interests me, and my uncle's county friends do not. Is that a sufficient answer, Alicia?"

Miss Audley gave her head a little scornful toss.

"It's as good an answer as I shall ever

get from you, Bob," she said, impatiently; "but pray amuse yourself in your own way; loll in an easy-chair all day, with those two absurd dogs asleep on your knees; spoil my lady's window-curtains with your cigars; and annoy everybody in the house with your stupid, inanimate countenance."

Mr. Robert Audley opened his handsome grey eyes to their widest extent at this tirade, and looked helplessly at Miss Alicia.

The young lady was walking up and down the room, slashing the skirt of her habit with her riding-whip. Her eyes sparkled with an angry flash, and a crimson glow burned under her clear brown skin. The young barrister knew very well, by these diagnostics, that his cousin was in a passion.

"Yes," she repeated, "your stupid, inanimate countenance. Do you know, Robert Audley, that with all your mock amiability, you are brimful of conceit and superciliousness. You look down upon our amusements; you lift up your eyebrows, and shrug your shoulders, and throw yourself back in your chair, and wash your hands of us and our pleasures. You are a selfish, cold-hearted Sybarite—"

"Alicia! Good—gracious—me!"

The morning paper dropped out of his hands, and he sat feebly staring at his assailant.

"Yes, *selfish*, Robert Audley! You take home half-starved dogs, because you like half-starved dogs. You stoop down, and pat the head of every good-for-nothing cur in the village street, because you like good-for-nothing curs. You notice little children, and give them halfpence, because it amuses you to do so. But you lift your eyebrows a quarter of a yard when poor Sir Harry Towers tells a stupid story, and stare the poor fellow out of countenance with your lazy insolence. As to your amiability, you would let a man hit you, and say 'Thank you' for the blow, rather than take the trouble to hit him again; but you wouldn't go half a mile out of your way to serve your dearest friend. Sir Harry is worth twenty of you, though he *did* write to ask if my m-a-i-r Atalanta had recovered from the sprain. He can't spell, or lift his eyebrows to the roots of his hair; but he would go through fire and water for the girl he loves; while *you*—"

At this very point, when Robert was most prepared to encounter his cousin's

violence, and when Miss Alicia seemed about to make her strongest attack, the young lady broke down altogether, and burst into tears.

Robert sprang from his easy-chair, upsetting his dogs on the carpet.

"Alicia, my darling, what is it?"

"It's—it's—it's the feather of my hat that got into my eyes," sobbed his cousin; and before he could investigate the truth of this assertion Alicia had darted out of the room.

Robert Audley was preparing to follow her, when he heard her voice in the courtyard below, amidst the trampling of horses and the clamour of visitors, dogs, and grooms. Sir Harry Towers, the most aristocratic young sportsman in the neighbourhood, had just taken her little foot in his hand as she sprang into her saddle.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Robert, as he watched the merry party of equestrians until they disappeared under the archway. "What does all this mean? How charmingly she sits her horse! What a pretty figure, too, and a fine, candid, brown, rosy face; but to fly at a fellow like that, without the least provocation! That's the consequence of letting a girl follow the hounds. She learns to look at everything in life as she does at six feet of timber or a sunk fence; she goes through the world as she goes across country—straight ahead, and over everything. Such a nice girl as she might have been, too, if she'd been brought up in Fig-tree-court! If ever I marry, and have daughters (which remote contingency may Heaven forefend!), they shall be educated in Paper Buildings, take their sole exercise in the Temple Gardens, and they shall never go beyond the gates till they are marriageable, when I will take them straight across Fleet-street to St. Dunstan's church, and deliver them into the hands of their husbands."

With such reflections as these did Mr. Robert Audley beguile the time until his lady re-entered the drawing-room, fresh and radiant in her elegant morning costume, her yellow curls glistening with the perfumed waters in which she had bathed, and her velvet-covered sketch-book in her arms. She planted a little easel upon a table by the window, seated herself before it, and began to mix the colours upon her palette, Robert watching her out of his half-closed eyes.

"You are sure my cigar does not annoy you, Lady Audley?"

"Oh, no, indeed; I am quite used to

the smell of tobacco. Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, smoked all the evening when I lived in his house."

"Dawson is a good fellow, isn't he?" Robert asked carelessly.

My lady burst into her pretty gushing laugh.

"The dearest of good creatures," she said. "He paid me five-and-twenty pounds a year—only fancy five-and-twenty pounds! That made six pounds five a quarter. How well I remember receiving the money—six dingy old sovereigns, and a little heap of untidy, dirty silver, that came straight from the till in the surgery! And then how glad I was to get it! While now—I can't help laughing while I think of it—these colours I am using cost a guinea each at Winsor and Newton's—the carmine and ultra-marine thirty shillings. I gave Mrs. Dawson one of my silk dresses the other day, and the poor thing kissed me, and the surgeon carried the bundle home under his cloak."

My lady laughed long and joyously at the thought. Her colours were mixed; she was copying a water-coloured sketch of an impossibly beautiful Italian peasant in an impossibly Turneresque atmosphere. The sketch was nearly finished, and she had only to put in some critical little touches with the most delicate of her sable pencils. She prepared herself daintily for the work, looking sideways at the painting.

All this time Mr. Robert Audley's eyes were fixed intently on her pretty face.

"It is a change," he said, after so long a pause that my lady might have forgotten what she had been talking of; "it is a change! Some women would do a great deal to accomplish such a change as that."

Lucy Audley's clear blue eyes dilated as she fixed them suddenly on the young barrister. The winter sunlight, gleaming full upon her face from a side window, lit up the azure of those beautiful eyes, till their colour seemed to flicker and tremble betwixt blue and green, as the opal tints of the sea change upon a summer's day. The small brush fell from her hand, and blotted out the peasant's face under a widening circle of crimson lake.

Robert Audley was tenderly coaxing the crumbled leaf of his cigar with cautious fingers.

"My friend at the corner of Chancery-lane has not given me such good Manillas as usual," he murmured. "If ever you smoke, my dear aunt (and I am told that many women take a quiet weed under the

rose), be very careful how you choose your cigars."

My lady drew a long breath, picked up her brush, and laughed aloud at Robert's advice.

"What an eccentric creature you are, Mr. Audley! Do you know that you sometimes puzzle me —?"

"Not more than you puzzle me, my dear aunt."

My lady put away her colours and sketch-book, and seating herself in the deep recess of another window, at a considerable distance from Robert Audley, settled herself to a large piece of Berlin-wool work—a piece of embroidery which the Penelopes of ten or twelve years ago were very fond of exercising their ingenuity upon—the Olden Time at Bolton Abbey.

Seated in the embrasure of this window, my lady was separated from Robert Audley by the whole length of the room, and the young man could only catch an occasional glimpse of her fair face, surrounded by its bright aureole of hazy golden hair.

Robert Audley had been a week at the Court, but as yet neither he nor my lady had mentioned the name of George Talboys.

This morning, however, after exhausting the usual topics of conversation, Lady Audley made an inquiry about her nephew's friend—"that Mr. George—George—" she said, hesitating.

"Talboys," suggested Robert.

"Yes, to be sure—Mr. George Talboys. Rather a singular name by-the-bye, and certainly, by all accounts, a very singular person. Have you seen him lately?"

"I have not seen him since the 7th of September last—the day upon which he left me asleep in the meadows on the other side of the village."

"Dear me!" exclaimed my lady, "what a very strange young man this Mr. George Talboys must be! Pray tell me all about it."

Robert told, in a few words, of his visit to Southampton and his journey to Liverpool, with their different results, my lady listening very attentively.

In order to tell this story to better advantage, the young man left his chair, and, crossing the room, took up his place opposite to Lady Audley in the embrasure of the window.

"And what do you infer from all this?" asked my lady, after a pause.

"It is so great a mystery to me," he answered, "that I scarcely dare to draw any conclusion whatever; but in the obscurity I think I can grope my way to two

suppositions, which to me seem almost certainties."

"And they are ——"

"First, that George Talboys never went beyond Southampton. Secondly, that he never went to Southampton at all."

"But you traced him there. His father-in-law had seen him."

"I have reason to doubt his father-in-law's integrity."

"Good gracious me!" cried my lady, piteously. "What do you mean by all this?"

"Lady Audley," answered the young man, gravely, "I have never practised as a barrister. I have enrolled myself in the ranks of a profession, the members of which hold solemn responsibilities, and have sacred duties to perform; and I have shrunk from those responsibilities and duties, as I have from all the fatigues of this troublesome life: but we are sometimes forced into the very position we have most avoided, and I have found myself lately compelled to think of these things. Lady Audley, did you ever study the theory of circumstantial evidence?"

"How can you ask a poor little woman about such horrid things?" exclaimed my lady.

"Circumstantial evidence," continued the young man, as if he scarcely heard Lady Audley's interruption, "that wonderful fabric which is built out of straws collected at every point of the compass, and which is yet strong enough to hang a man. Upon what infinitesimal trifles may sometimes hang the whole secret of some wicked mystery, inexplicable heretofore to the wisest upon the earth! A scrap of paper; a shred of some torn garment; the button off a coat; a word dropped inadvertently from the over-cautious lips of guilt; the fragment of a letter; the shutting or opening of a door; a shadow on a window-blind; the accuracy of a moment, tested by one of Benson's watches; a thousand circumstances so slight as to be forgotten by the criminal, but links of iron in the wonderful chain forged by the science of the detective officer; and, lo! the gallows is built up; the solemn bell tolls through the dismal grey of the early morning; the drop creaks under the guilty feet; and the penalty of crime is paid."

Faint shadows of green and crimson fell upon my lady's face from the painted escutcheons in the mullioned window by which she sat; but every trace of the

natural colour of that face had faded out, leaving it a ghastly ashen grey.

Sitting quietly in her chair, her head fallen back upon the amber damask cushions, and her little hands lying powerless in her lap, Lady Audley had fainted away.

"The radius grows narrower day by day," said Robert Audley. "George Talboys never reached Southampton."

CHAPTER XVI.

ROBERT AUDLEY GETS HIS CONGÉ.

THE Christmas week was over, and one by one the country visitors dropped away from Audley Court. The fat squire and his wife abandoned the grey, tapestried chamber, and left the black-browed warriors looming from the wall to scowl upon and threaten new guests, or to glare vengefully upon vacancy. The merry girls on the second story packed, or caused to be packed, their trunks and imperials, and tumbled gauze ball-dresses were taken home that had been brought fresh to Audley. Blundering old family chariots, with horses whose untrimmed fetlocks told of rougher work than even country roads, were brought round to the broad space before the grim oak door, and laden with chaotic heaps of womanly luggage. Pretty rosy faces peeped out of the carriage windows to smile the last farewell upon the group at the hall door, as the vehicle rattled and rumbled under the ivied archway. Sir Michael was in request everywhere. Shaking hands with the young sportsmen; kissing the rosy-cheeked girls; sometimes even embracing portly matrons who came to thank him for their pleasant visit; everywhere genial, hospitable, generous, happy, and beloved, the baronet hurried from room to room, from the hall to the stables, from the stables to the courtyard, from the courtyard to the arched gateway to speed the parting guest.

My lady's yellow curls flashed hither and thither like wandering gleams of sunshine on these busy days of farewell. Her great blue eyes had a pretty, mournful look, in charming unison with the soft pressure of her little hand, and that friendly, though perhaps rather stereotyped speech, in which she told her visitors how she was *so* sorry to lose them, and how she didn't know what she should do till they came once more to enliven the Court by their charming society.

But however sorry my lady might be to lose her visitors, there was at least one guest whose society she was not deprived of. Robert Audley showed no intention whatever of leaving his uncle's house. He had no professional duties, he said; Fig-tree-court was delightfully shady in hot weather, but there was a sharp corner round which the wind came in the winter months, armed with avenging rheumatisms and influenzas. Everybody was so good to him at the Court, that really he had no inclination to hurry away.

Sir Michael had but one answer to this: "Stay, my dear boy; stay, my dear Bob, as long as ever you like. I have no son, and you stand to me in the place of one. Make yourself agreeable to Lucy, and make the Court your home as long as you live."

To which Robert would merely reply by grasping his uncle's hand vehemently, and muttering something about "a jolly old prince."

It was to be observed that there was sometimes a certain vague sadness in the young man's tone when he called Sir Michael "a jolly old prince;" some shadow of affectionate regret that brought a mist into Robert's eyes, as he sat in a corner of the room looking thoughtfully at the white-bearded baronet.

Before the last of the young sportsmen departed, Sir Harry Towers demanded and obtained an interview with Miss Alicia Audley in the oak library—an interview in which considerable emotion was displayed by the stalwart young fox-hunter; so much emotion, indeed, and of such a genuine and honest character, that Alicia fairly broke down as she told him that she should for ever esteem and respect him for his true and noble heart, but that he must never, never, never, unless he wished to cause her the most cruel distress, ask more from her than this esteem and respect.

Sir Harry left the library by the French window opening into the pond-garden. He strolled into that very lime-walk which George Talboys had compared to an avenue in a churchyard, and under the leafless trees fought the battle of his brave young heart.

"What a fool I am to feel it like this!" he cried, stamping his foot upon the frosty ground. "I always knew it would be so; I always knew that she was a hundred times too good for me. God bless her! How nobly and tenderly she spoke; how beautiful she looked with

the crimson blushes under her brown skin, and the tears in her big grey eyes—almost as handsome as the day she took the sunk fence, and let me put the brush in her hat as we rode home! God bless her! I can get over anything as long as she doesn't care for that sneaking lawyer. But I couldn't stand that."

That sneaking lawyer, by which appellation Sir Harry alluded to Mr. Robert Audley, was standing in the hall, looking at a map of the midland counties, when Alicia came out of the library, with red eyes, after her interview with the fox-hunting baronet.

Robert, who was short-sighted, had his eyes within half an inch of the surface of the map as the young lady approached him.

"Yes," he said, "Norwich *is* in Norfolk, and that fool, young Vincent, said it was in Herefordshire. Ha, Alicia, is that you?"

He turned round so as to intercept Miss Audley on her way to the staircase.

"Yes," replied his cousin curtly, trying to pass him.

"Alicia, you have been crying."

The young lady did not condescend to reply.

"You have been crying, Alicia. Sir Harry Towers, of Towers Park, in the county of Herts, has been making you an offer of his hand, eh?"

"Have you been listening at the door, Mr. Audley?"

"I have not, Miss Audley. On principle, I object to listen, and in practice I believe it to be a very troublesome proceeding; but I am a barrister, Miss Alicia, and able to draw a conclusion by induction. Do you know what inductive evidence is, Miss Audley?"

"No," replied Alicia, looking at her cousin as a handsome young panther might look at its daring tormentor.

"I thought not. I dare say Sir Harry would ask if it was a new kind of horse-ball. I knew by induction that the baronet was going to make you an offer; first, because he came down stairs with his hair parted on the wrong side, and his face as pale as the table-cloth; secondly, because he couldn't eat any breakfast, and let his coffee go the wrong way; and thirdly, because he asked for an interview with you before he left the Court. Well, how's it to be, Alicia? Do we marry the baronet, and is poor Cousin Bob to be best man at the wedding?"

"Sir Harry Towers is a noble-hearted

young man," said Alicia, still trying to pass her cousin.

"But do we accept him—yes or no? Are we to be Lady Towers, with a superb estate in Hertfordshire, summer quarters for our hunters, and a drag with outriders to drive us across to papa's place in Essex? Is it to be so, Alicia, or not?"

"What is that to you, Mr. Robert Audley?" cried Alicia, passionately. "What do *you* care what becomes of me, or whom I marry? If I married a chimney-sweep, you'd only lift up your eyebrows and say, 'Bless my soul, she was always eccentric.' I have refused Sir Harry Towers; but when I think of his generous and unselfish affection, and compare it with the heartless, lazy, selfish, supercilious indifference of other men, I've a good mind to run after him, and tell him—"

"That you'll retract, and be my Lady Towers?"

"Yes."

"Then don't, Alicia, don't," said Robert Audley, grasping his cousin's slender little wrist, and leading her upstairs. "Come into the drawing-room with me, Alicia, my poor little cousin; my charming, impetuous, alarming little cousin. Sit down here in this mullioned window, and let us talk seriously and leave off quarrelling if we can."

The cousins had the drawing-room all to themselves. Sir Michael was out, my lady in her own apartments, and poor Sir Harry Towers walking up and down upon the gravel walk, darkened with the flickering shadows of the leafless branches in the cold winter sunshine.

"My poor little Alicia," said Robert, as tenderly as if he had been addressing some spoiled child, "do you suppose that because people don't wear vinegar tops, or part their hair on the wrong side, or conduct themselves altogether after the manner of well-meaning maniacs, by way of proving the vehemence of their passion—do you suppose because of this, Alicia Audley, that they may not be just as sensible of the merits of a dear little, warm-hearted, and affectionate girl as ever their neighbours can be? Life is such a very troublesome matter, when all is said and done, that it's as well even to take its blessings quietly. I don't make a great howling because I can get good cigars one door from the corner of Chancery Lane, and have a dear, good girl for my cousin; but I am not the less grateful to Providence that it is so."

Alicia opened her grey eyes to their widest extent, looking her cousin full in the face with a bewildered stare. Robert had picked up the ugliest and leanest of his attendant curs, and was placidly stroking the animal's ears.

"Is this all you have to say to me, Robert?" Miss Audley asked meekly.

"Well, yes, I think so," replied her cousin, after considerable deliberation. "I fancy that what I wanted to say was this—don't marry the fox-hunting baronet, if you like anybody else better; for if you'll only be patient and take life easily, and try and reform yourself of banging doors, bouncing in and out of rooms, talking of the stables, and riding across country, I've no doubt the person you prefer will make you a very excellent husband."

"Thank you, cousin," said Miss Audley, crimsoning with bright indignant blushes up to the roots of her waving brown hair; "but as you may not know the person I prefer, I think you had better not take upon yourself to answer for him."

Robert pulled the dog's ears thoughtfully for some moments.

"No, to be sure," he said, after a pause. "Of course, if I don't know him—but I thought I did."

"*Did you?*" exclaimed Alicia; and opening the door with a violence that made her cousin shiver, she bounced out of the drawing-room.

"I only said I thought I knew him," Robert called after her; and then, as he sank into an easy-chair, he murmured thoughtfully, "Such a nice girl, too, if she didn't bounce!"

So poor Sir Harry Towers rode away from Audley Court, looking very crest-fallen and dismal.

He had very little pleasure now in returning to the stately mansion hidden among sheltering oaks and venerable beeches. The square, red-brick house gleaming at the end of a long arcade of leafless trees was to be for ever desolate, he thought, since Alicia would not come to be its mistress.

A hundred improvements planned and thought of were dismissed from his mind as useless now. The hunter that Jim the trainer was breaking in for a lady; the two pointer pups that were being reared for the next shooting season; the big black retriever that would have carried Alicia's parasol; the pavilion in the garden, disused since his mother's death, but which he had meant to have restored for

Miss Audley—all these things were now so much vanity and vexation of spirit.

"What's the good of being rich, if one has no one to help spend one's money?" said the young baronet. "One only grows a selfish beggar, and takes to drinking too much port. It's a hard thing that a girl can refuse a true heart and such stables as we've got at the park. It unsettles a man somehow."

Indeed, this unlooked-for rejection had very much unsettled the few ideas which made up the small sum of the young baronet's mind.

He had been desperately in love with Alicia ever since the last hunting season, when he had met her at a county ball. His passion, cherished through the slow monotony of a summer, had broken out afresh in the merry winter months, and the young man's *mauvaise honte* alone had delayed the offer of his hand. But he had never for a moment supposed that he would be refused; he was so used to the adulation of mothers who had daughters to marry, and of even the daughters themselves; he had been so accustomed to feel himself the leading personage in an assembly, although half the wits of the age had been there, and he could only say, "Haw, to be sure!" and "By Jove—hum!" he had been so spoiled by the flatteries of bright eyes that had looked, or seemed to look, the brighter when he drew near, that without being possessed of one shadow of personal vanity, he had yet come to think that he had only to make an offer to the prettiest girl in Essex to behold himself immediately accepted.

"Yes," he would say complacently to some admiring satellite, "I know I'm a good match, and I know what makes the gals so civil. They're very pretty, and they're very friendly to a fellow; but I don't care about 'em. They're all alike—they can only drop their eyes and say, 'Lor, Sir Harry, and why do you call that curly black dog a retriever?' or, 'Oh, Sir Harry, and did the poor mare really sprain her pastern shoulder-blade?' I haven't got much brains myself, I know," the baronet would add deprecatingly; "and I don't want a strong-minded woman, who writes books and wears green spectacles; but, hang it! I like a gal who knows what she's talking about."

So when Alicia said "No," or rather, made that pretty speech about esteem and respect, which well-bred young ladies substitute for the obnoxious monosyllable, Sir Harry Towers felt that the whole

fabric of the future he had built up so complacently was shivered into a heap of dingy ruins.

Sir Michael grasped him warmly by the hand just before the young man mounted his horse in the courtyard.

"I'm very sorry, Towers," he said. "You're as good a fellow as ever breathed, and would have made my girl an excellent husband; but you know there's a cousin, and I think that—"

"Don't say that, Sir Michael," interposed the fox-hunter energetically. "I can get over anything but that. A fellow whose hand upon the curb weighs half a ton (why, he pulled the Cavalier's mouth to pieces, Sir, the day you let him ride the horse); a fellow who turns his collars down, and eats bread and marmalade! No, no, Sir Michael; it's a queer world, but I can't think *that* of Miss Audley. There must be some one in the background, Sir; it can't be the cousin."

Sir Michael shook his head as the rejected suitor rode away.

"I don't know about that," he muttered. "Bob's a good lad, and the girl might do worse; but he hangs back, as if he didn't care for her. There's some mystery—there's some mystery!"

The old baronet said this in that semi-thoughtful tone with which we speak of other people's affairs. The shadows of the early winter twilight, gathering thickest under the low oak ceiling of the hall, and the quaint curve of the arched doorway, fell darkly round his handsome head; but the light of his declining life, his beautiful and beloved young wife, was near him, and he could see no shadows when she was by.

She came skipping through the hall to meet him, and shaking her golden ringlets, buried her bright head on her husband's breast.

"So the last of our visitors is gone, dear, and we're all alone," she said. "Isn't that nice?"

"Yes, darling," he answered fondly, stroking her bright hair.

"Except Mr. Robert Audley. How long is that nephew of yours going to stay here?"

"As long as he likes, my pet; he's always welcome," said the baronet; and then, as if remembering himself, he added tenderly, "But not unless his visit is agreeable to you, darling; not if his lazy habits, or his smoking, or his dogs, or anything about him is displeasing to you."

Lady Audley pursed up her rosy lips, and looked thoughtfully at the ground.

"It isn't that," she said hesitatingly. "Mr. Audley is a very agreeable young man, and a very honourable young man; but you know, Sir Michael, I'm rather a young aunt for such a nephew, and—"

"And what, Lucy?" asked the baronet fiercely.

"Poor Alicia is rather jealous of any attention Mr. Audley pays me, and—and—I think it would be better for her happiness if your nephew were to bring his visit to a close."

"He shall go to-night, Lucy," exclaimed Sir Michael. "I'm a blind, neglectful fool not to have thought of this before. My lovely little darling, it was scarcely just to Bob to expose the poor lad to your fascinations. I know him to be as good and true-hearted a fellow as ever breathed, but—but—he shall go to-night."

"But you won't be too abrupt, dear? You won't be rude?"

"Rude! No, Lucy. I left him smoking in the lime-walk. I'll go and tell him that he must get out of the house in an hour."

So in that leafless avenue, under whose gloomy shade George Talboys had stood on that thunderous evening before the day of his disappearance, Sir Michael

Audley told his nephew that the Court was no home for him, and that my lady was too young and pretty to accept the attentions of a handsome nephew of eight-and-twenty.

Robert only shrugged his shoulders and elevated his thick black eyebrows as Sir Michael delicately hinted all this.

"I have been attentive to my lady," he said. "She interests me—strongly, strangely interests me;" and then, with a change in his voice, and an emotion not common to him, he turned to the baronet, and grasping his hand, exclaimed, "God forbid, my dear uncle, that I should ever bring trouble upon such a noble heart as yours! God forbid that the lightest shadow of dishonour should ever fall upon your honoured head—least of all through any agency of mine!"

The young man uttered these few words in a broken and disjointed fashion in which Sir Michael had never heard him speak before, and then turning away his head, fairly broke down.

He left the Court that night, but he did not go far. Instead of taking the evening train for London, he went straight up to the little village of Mount Stanning, and walking into the neatly-kept inn, asked Phœbe Marks if he could be accommodated with apartments.

(To be continued.)

A MAY-DAY RHYME.

Oh, joyful is the day,
 In the sunny month of May,
 When bands of merry-hearted maids go laughing in the light;
 When hedges gleam like snow,
 Where hawthorn bushes blow,
 And linnets warble in the croft like angels out of sight.

'Tis joyful where the streams
 Sparkle 'neath the golden beams,
 And the daisy-dotted meadow laughs like silver-crested sea;
 When the blackbird and the thrush
 Flit from field to greening bush,
 And ply their merry piping 'neath the shadow of the tree.

Now sails the bee along,
 With a fairy sort of song,
 Or a soft and soothing humming like the play of angel's wing.—
 And the bonnie lark so high
 Beats against the dappled sky,
 With a canticle that stirs a heart to leap aloft and sing.

'Twas such a blushing May,
 In the virgin time of day,
 That lured the Roman ladies forth to vales and mountains high;
 And back to classic Greece,
 Ere Jason sought the fleece,
 The multitude went forth to sing their May-day psalms of joy.

To FLORA, queen of flowers,
 They scattered perfumed showers
 Of choicest buds and blossoms from the forest and the field;
 And to Venus at her shrine
 They paid homage all divine,
 And unto both such worship gave as grateful hearts could yield.

So, when broke the May-day smile
 Over Britain's wooded isle,
 The Druids went with mighty songs to herald in the dawn;
 They struck their golden shields,
 As they march'd o'er grassy fields,
 And throngs of joyful worshippers were gathered ere the morn.

And when the blood-red sun
 His May-day march begun,
 A million throbbing hearts poured forth their gratitude in prayer;
 The golden splendour grew,
 The chorus swelled anew,
 And May-day benedictions fell on all who worshipped there.

So led us heed the time,
When the year is in its prime,
To worship Him who sent the birds to bless us with their song;
Who hung aloft the sun,
In his whirling course to run,
That each renewing year might pass with fruitfulness along.

And who that has a heart,
Could play the sordid part
Of speaking harsh or frowning down a suppliant in May?
There are lessons all around,
From blue sky to budding ground,
Which teach the joy of kindness to our brothers in the clay.

So, like the nodding flowers,
Spend your few and fleeting hours,
Diffusing soothing incense to each bruised and broken heart;
And like the merry birds,
Utter none but pleasant words,
Though bitterness and scorn survive where hate still plays its part.

So shall you bless the grass,
And the shadows as they pass;
For many gaps of beauty you may gather for the day,
There are not too many friends
For the soul that sorrow bends;
And the heart may still grow kinder 'mid the budding bloom of May.

CELEBRITY: ITS PAINS AND PENALTIES.

AMID the many and various states of life in which the lot of mortals is cast in this sublunary world of ours, we know not in truth a state of existence more sad, more disagreeable, more slavish, in a word, than that of the *celebrated man*.

Do you love repose and liberty? Is it your ambition to live at your own free will, to journey whithersoever your own inclination may lead you, and in the manner most pleasing to you? Of remaining alone when you like; of speaking when it suits your convenience so to do, of keeping silence when you prefer it? Believe our words, dear reader, remain little, humble, unperceived. Above all things, if it is your misfortune to be a statesman, a politician, or a man of letters, take especial care lest you contract a habit of uttering brilliant speeches in "the House," or of writing pieces capable of drawing crowds to the doors of "Old Drury,"—or rather of "Sadler's Wells," or the "Marylebone," for, alas!

the glory of Drury has long since passed away—or, in short, of perpetrating any one of those actions which are now-a-days regarded as prodigious, impracticable, or chimerical. Bear in mind that, from the day on which you become a "Lion," that you are run after, talked to, sung to, danced to; from that ill-fated day you no longer belong to yourself; your person, your gestures, your words, your name, have become public property; every one considers that he has the right of making the use of them that may best serve his or her separate purpose.—And the most capricious, the most fantastic, the most imperious, the most tyrannical of masters is, without contradiction, that many-headed monster which we are pleased to denominate the "World."

When you go to a party—and if you have not previously been in the habit of going into the "World," you are obliged to appear there now—hope no longer to enter noiselessly, to glide furtively into

the crowd, to gain some snug little corner, where you may be permitted to sit modestly ensconced between two or three friends whose conversation interests and amuses you; or rather, alone, at a short distance from the object of your dreams whose grace and beauty you silently contemplate. No such thing; your apparition is an event which moves, removes, and upsets all; they run in crowds to meet you, they surround you, they press upon you; in their eagerness as it were but just to touch the hem of your garment, they dispute with you even for that meagre portion of fresh air which you imagine in your innocence you have the right of breathing; all speak to you, question you, and you are expected to have at instant command a myriad of phrases, remarkable, witty, or profound; in short, such phrases as they can circulate next day all over town as the latest sayings of the celebrated Mr. So and So; happy if after two or three hours of this frightful exercise your tormentors are kind enough to permit you to return home utterly exhausted, and thoroughly broken down both in mind and body.

Above all things, most especially dread and shun the gentlemen connected with the public press; for be assured that with whatever veil you may seek to shroud your person, you cannot remain long hidden from their penetrating glance; they have eyes which pierce through all tissues, pens which respect no mystery. If it be your lot to have met with the most trifling accident, or to have caught the slightest cold, a thousand *bulletins* are forthwith issued and dispersed from one end of the town to the other; in society, in the drawing-rooms of Belgravia, and in the clubs, nothing is spoken of among great and small but the state of your pulse, of what physician is attending you, if your last night had been a tranquil one, and if the medicine administered has had the desired effect.

When you travel, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg, New York even, know long before your own relations and friends do that you have taken your departure from Switzerland, or that you are drinking the waters of Spa or Wiesbaden; and people given to conjecturing, puzzle their heads to divine, and having, as they imagine, divined, hasten to point out to their less clear-sighted brethren the political, or literary, or scientific end of your journey; for people take it for granted that all your movements must be for some important purpose, never for a moment imagining that a celebrated man could possibly undertake a continental tour for his mere individual amusement.

More than this, your itinerary is made public, and at every post-house you must run the gauntlet of a crowd of idlers and sight-seers, esteeming yourself fortunate if you escape the infliction of an harangue from the mayor or other principal personage of the place. The landlord of the hotel at which you alight, arranges his entire household in review order to receive you with becoming respect; you are not free to choose your own room, to order your own dinner; a man like you must occupy the best apartments in the house, devour the choicest morsels, drink the finest wines, pay the highest price for everything, and give double gratuities to all the servants.

In conclusion, we declare to you, dear reader, in all the sincerity of our heart of hearts, that were we to be transformed by some wayward freak of dame Nature, into a crossing sweeper, a cab driver, or an omnibus cad, we would willingly and contentedly resign ourselves to our lot; but Heaven preserve us, say we, from ever being a "celebrated man," or if it is our sad destiny to become one, we earnestly pray that such an event may not come to pass until after we are numbered with the things that are gone.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A RELIEVING OFFICER.*

No. 1.—THE BURNING WORKHOUSE.

"COME, old fellow, don't sit moping and making yourself miserable. Cheer up, and if you've nothing better to do, run over and see us at Tacklewell to-morrow evening, and stop till Monday morning. It will brighten you up a bit. And in all conscience you want enlivening, you look the very picture of wretchedness."

Thus was I addressed (said Mr. Jones) one dull day in November, when I was very much "out of sorts," and sat dwelling on my troubles, until they appeared twice as bad as they really were. The speaker was an intimate friend, a lively, hearty fellow, a young farmer, living about four miles off.

"I'll come with pleasure, Millboys," I replied. "It will do me good. I know there's not much the matter with me. I shall soon shake it off."

So on the following afternoon I started. The weather had cleared, and was now bright and dry. The road to Tacklewell was good, and the view pretty. Travelling in my light chaise-cart, I quickly reached my friend's farmhouse.

Cheerfully, cheerfully, did Millboys welcome me. He was the most light-hearted man I ever knew. Nothing fetched a sigh from him. As to any suffering of his own doing so, it was out of the question, and even the sufferings of others could only make him look grave (kind and good as he was); some remedy, sure and certain to his mind, immediately occurred to him, and drove away all moaning and misgiving.

We had a very pleasant evening; Millboys was unmarried, so we were by ourselves. Sunday morning was not far off when we separated for the night, and retired to our respective bedrooms.

My room was rather large. It was in front of the house, and commanded an extensive view. Bramblestone was visible in the distance, though not very distinctly, for a high hill rose immediately out of Tacklewell, thus partly concealing Bramblestone, which lay in a valley. The room had a bold bow window. For several minutes before getting into bed I stood looking out.

Exceedingly rich and beautiful, in the moonlight, was the scenery round about. Very retired, indeed, was the spot, and I could not help thinking, as I stood there, in the dead of night, that it was not quite the place in which I should like to live all the year round, with only an old man-servant close upon seventy, with but one eye, and very deaf. There were rough characters often prowling in the neighbourhood of Bramblestone, and certainly here was an abode likely to find favour in the eye of uninvited midnight visitors. However, that was Millboys' affair, not mine—so away to bed.

Yes, but not to sleep. In the first place the ground opened, and in an instant I sank into an awful abyss, coming up again, though, directly, clutching the bedclothes, my pulse beating an hundred and twenty, and the perspiration bedewing me. This was the first attack of nightmare. Then I had a second, which was much worse.

Why did I ever come to this dreadful place? Who would ever sleep in a house so surrounded with danger? Why, any robber might break in here with impunity, might murder the unfortunate inmates, and ransack the place, without the smallest difficulty. I certainly will not sleep here another night.

These were the reproaches which in my partial sleep I heaped upon myself. I never lost consciousness as to where I was, nor of the main circumstances about me.

"I shall be very fortunate if I ever get through to-night. There's no lock to that door, I know, for I wanted to lock it, and could not, before I came to bed. Anybody can enter. How horribly helpless is my condition, why did I ever come?" &c.

A short interval of real sleep.

"Dear me! this is very odd! Generally when I sleep my head is the other way. Mercy on me! what fearful wonder has happened? My head is where my feet should be! Did I lie down thus? Oh, ah, I recollect, I'm not in my own bed, I'm sleeping at Millboys', I remem-

* The preceding "Recollections of a Relieving Officer" have been published in a volume by Messrs. Ward and Lock. Those now and hereafter to be submitted to our readers have never before been printed.

ber. But Millboys, oh, what a dangerous place! how awfully secluded! one might be murdered any night in that house with the greatest ease. Oh, why did I ever come?" &c.

An interval of tossing about and groaning.

"It seems to me now that very likely the robbers *will* come to-night. I cannot say why I think so, but that is my impression. It is quite dark. My throat might be cut from ear to ear at any moment. The murderer may be by the bed-curtain at this instant. I thought I felt something warm. He is there, and it's his breath, I do believe. Of course, it is quite intelligible. There was no lock to the door. Farewell, wife and children. Oh, why did I come?"

Sleep for five minutes.

"Just so—there's not the smallest doubt about it now. I heard the handle of the door move distinctly. It is shocking to die in this way, to be butchered like a sheep. But what can I do? I'm in a trance, I suppose. I can't move in the least. I can't even yell. Perhaps, when the villain demanded my money, if I could but answer him, he would spare me, but not a syllable can I utter, not a sign can I show. He will be incensed at my obstinacy, and will put an end to me in a rage. Oh, why did I ever come?" &c.

Another short interval. My uneasy fancy takes a fresh turn.

"How remarkably dark it is, to be sure! It is very curious what appearances sometimes present themselves in the dark. How well I recollect that doggerel which old Anne used to be so fond of repeating to us children. It was about the ghost of some luckless lady who revenged herself for the murder of herself and child by her cruel husband. The concluding lines old Anne used to deliver with much force—

"She tore him, she tore him, she tore him in three,
And all for the murder of her baby and she."

Five minutes' sleep. A great start.

"HERE he is! he's come now! There's the creaking of the door! He's bringing a light! I see him! I see him! There's the knife—it's all over with me! he's sharpening it on his hand—he's feeling the edge. Good bye, dear ones at home! Oh, why did I—but never mind now. He's bending over me. I see the glare of his eyes. He's feeling my face

with his hand. If I could but give a yell, only one yell, I might be saved. Perhaps Millboys is not yet slaughtered. He might come to me. Y-a-a-a-a-a-a-h!"

"Bless me, old chap, don't be in such an awful fright! it's neither a ghost nor a burglar. I'm sorry I've so alarmed you, but I thought I'd better wake you. When you've a little recovered yourself, I'll tell you why. Take it coolly, old friend."

Thus spoke Millboys, who partly dressed, was standing by the bedside with a candle.

"That horrid nightmare!" I said; "but what is it, Millboys? Anything wrong? Give me the poker" — (my nightmare had not quite left me) — "haven't you got any fire-arms?"

Millboys laughed heartily. "What are you thinking of? there are no robbers. But I say, Jones, there's a fire over in Bramblestone, and one I want you to look at. Up with you—make haste!"

I was wide-awake now, and in an instant I was at the window. In the distance the sky was a deep red. There was a large fire in Bramblestone.

"Put some things on, and come on to the roof," said Millboys. I complied, and followed him thither. I gazed steadily at the conflagration.

"Mercy on me, Millboys, the workhouse is on fire! Gracious! there's no doubt about it! There's the post-office, that's Church-street."

"The workhouse it is, sure enough. You'll want to be off, Jones. I'll go and put the horse to, and we'll be there in no time."

Away we went at full pace, and more than once were very nearly sent flying over the hedge. I drove with fury.

"I say, friend Jones," at length remonstrated Millboys, "don't let's go in for broken arms and legs, you know. A few bruises I don't mind, but this style of yours will bring us to a regular smash presently. Remember, we can't see a yard before us."

"All right, never fear, Millboys," I replied, heartily; "I know every step of the road. You shan't come to any hurt while I'm driving, old friend. Only keep a tight seat, and—"

Over we went into a deep ditch, the mare kicking and plunging awfully, the chaise knocked to pieces, and Millboys and I sprawling with about an eighth of our senses left in us. Millboys was first up.

"Steer clear of the mare, Jones, whatever you do. Where are you? Give us your hand; crawl out, crawl out—mercy on me, crawl out! she'll smash you in a minute—rouse up, Jones!" he positively roared in his agony, at finding I was quite under the fragments of the chaise, which the mare was quickly pounding into pieces of the size of firewood. At last he dragged me out. Right glad were we to find we were neither of us much damaged.

"We'll just set the mare free, and then we'd better make for Bramblestone on foot as fast as we can," I said.

He agreed. We had but about a mile to walk. This was soon accomplished, and we were in the town. There all was confusion; the workhouse was burning fiercely, the paupers, old and young, ill and well, had been hastily withdrawn; the robust adults were helping to extinguish the fire, the others had been received into various places of temporary refuge. The puny parish engine was doing its contemptible best, and it seemed to me that as the flames felt the wretched little stream of water squirted over them, they rose higher, as though in derision. There was a great mob of people, some really rendering help, some appearing to do so, some actually obstructing the workers, and the mass quietly looking on, not without a certain complacency, as though it were a sight got up for their enjoyment, and for which there was nothing to pay. Although the fire had lasted some time, as yet the bulk of the building was uninjured, for the flames had broken out at one extremity, and had first consumed a quantity of out-buildings before they touched the main portion of the house. We really could do little more than look on, like those whom first we were inclined to blame. As usual, there was only a limited supply of water, and the most was being done with it that could be. Fortunately, the wind, which had been rather high, and blowing in the wrong direction, lulled, and the fire at once slackened.

"It'll go down now," said Millboys; "there's plenty of the ugly old place saved. I wish the number of inmates could be diminished to suit the diminished building."

Now was the time when I could be of use, so I and my companion pushed our way through the mob, and reached the dismayed officials, who, with some of the guardians, were standing by the ruins.

"No lives lost, no accidents, I hope?"

"We really hardly know at present,"

answered the workhouse master; "we believe not, but we have not yet called over the names of the regular paupers, and the names of the vagrants we never shall call over, for the book was dropped into the flames, but I expect they are all right."

"Where did it break out?"

"In the vagrant ward; how, is a perfect mystery. We never allow them candles, and there are no fire-places. My belief is, some rascal has set fire to the place."

We set to work, Millboys helping (go back quietly to his home and leave all this excitement, not he!), and after no small labour, we ascertained that not one of the regular paupers was either missing or hurt. Very glad and thankful we were for that. As regarded the vagrants, we could do nothing, for the reasons given.

The next day came a close inquiry into the origin of the fire. A number of the inmates of the vagrant ward volunteered their evidence, but it did not amount to much. They had been fast asleep, and had been suddenly awakened by a cry of fire, when they found the room full of smoke. The room was on the ground-floor (was, in fact, a superior sort of out-house), so they had only to burst open the door, which was easily done, and they were safe.

"Who first cried 'Fire?'"

The only response to this impertinent inquiry came from a most miserable-looking old man, who stated that he was scarcely asleep at the time, and had no doubt he heard the first cry, and it came from the man who had been lying by his side half an hour before.

"Where was he standing?"

"At the door, trying with all his might to break it open, but he could not."

"What became of him?"

"I don't know, for directly the lot of us were awake, there was a most tremendous rush to the door, and I went with it, and the man was knocked down and trampled on. I am sure of that, for he gave a dreadful cry, and several trampled over him getting out, but whether he got up again or what became of him, I can't say."

"Ah, gentlemen, never mind that—yes, I did—but never mind it."

"Well, but we would rather know."

"I most humbly beg your pardon, gentlemen, but nobody is obliged to criminate himself, and if I tell you about it (I can't think how I was so foolish as to say anything about it) you will prosecute me."

"Prosecute you—nonsense! Why, you were robbed, not the robber."

"No; but, gentlemen, you might think it wrong of me to have about me such a sum as five pounds. Oh, there, I've been and let it out"—(and the wretched creature shook with alarm).

"Five pounds! and you came for a night's lodging to our vagrant ward? However, never mind that now. You suspected this same man of robbing you of five pounds?"

"He lay down beside me," moaned the old vagabond, "and when he was asleep I took out my little treasure and counted it, and while I was doing so, I saw one of his eyes open and shut in a minute. Then I determined to keep awake, for I suspected mischief; but somehow I was so dead beat, I went off in a little doze, and did not wake till I heard the cry of fire; and as soon as I got outside I felt for my money, but oh, gentlemen! it was gone—all gone!"

It was here announced by the father of a little boy about seven years old, that the child could communicate something important.

The juvenile witness, having been enjoined to speak the truth, then testified—

That he and his father were lying next to the man alluded to by the last witness. He saw him distinctly as the moon shone full upon him, and this same man he saw afterwards at the door calling "fire," but he could not say whether he had been the first to raise the cry. While they were thus lying, he saw the man in question gently insert his hand in the old man's pocket, and draw forth gold, which he placed in his own pocket. The man then remained quiet for a quarter of an hour or more. At the expiration of that time, he saw the man carefully light a lucifer match, and instantaneously set fire in two or three places to the straw which lay plentifully on the floor of the room. Then there was a great uproar, and he and his father made their escape as speedily as possible.

The conclusion to be drawn from this evidence was of course palpable. The execrable miscreant had committed the theft easily enough, but how to escape with the plunder was the difficulty. The old man would, of course, discover his loss, the officials would be summoned, the whole batch of vagrants would be

searched, and the culprit detected. Then that brilliant scheme suggested itself of setting fire to the contents of the room (he had the means), and escaping in the confusion. It was hazardous, but it was bold. He was a scoundrel, perhaps, who liked bold measures.

Having taken down the closest description of the villain we could get, an order for handbills was at once given, a reward offered, and the police set to work. But we had little hope of securing the runaway, and even if we apprehended any one on suspicion, we foresaw the extreme difficulty of satisfying a jury as to identity. The master and porter had only a vague recollection of a man with the appearance described, and the evidence of a child of seven, aided only indirectly by that of a man of eighty, would, under such circumstances, scarcely avail to convict of the serious crime of incendiarism, though it might of theft.

So we had little hope of bringing the offender to full justice, even if we secured him.

While this investigation was going on in the board-room, the workmen were busy over the ruins, and when the guardians came forth, a considerable clearance had been made.

Suddenly we heard a loud murmur of astonishment among the lookers-on. We pressed forward.

"I say, Mr. Eardley," cried one to our chairman, "you must have had some uncommonly well-to-do paupers in your place last night. Why, look here, the men have just found these."

Five sovereigns!

We started. A suspicion of the truth burst upon us. Another moment, and it was confirmed. The workmen shouted the discovery of a body. Little of it remained, but enough for the old man and child to identify it. We saw the whole case. The only victim to the dread flames had been their iniquitous author! Having accomplished his fell purpose of setting the room, or, at least, its furniture, in a blaze, he doubtless thought to be the first to escape, but the door defied him. Then came the mad rush (as the old man had described), and he was trodden down and trampled on. We could easily imagine the rest. Those whose lives he had jeopardized passed out uninjured; but a just retribution left him to the devouring fire.

CYRIL WILDE.

FOR some reason which it does not concern us now to investigate, Kentucky, under the dominion of the white man, has continued to justify its native name of "Dark and Bloody Ground," in being the scene of a remarkable number of tragedies in real life.

One of these, less known to the public in later times, we think transcends all the others in boldness of conception, regularity of plot, variety of passion and character displayed, and horror and pathos of catastrophe. It might have furnished a worthy subject to the pen of Sophocles or Shakspeare, one that they would have found already cast into a highly dramatic form, requiring only fitting words to convey the passions of the actors. Little invention of situation or incident would have been needed, for neither could be imagined more intensely interesting; nor could the most finished artist have constructed a plot more coherent in all its details, or more strictly in accordance with the rules of composition—even to the preservation of the Aristotelian unities of time and place. So perfect, indeed, does it seem, that, were it not substantiated in every point by the records of a judicial tribunal, it might well be taken for the invention of some master of human nature and the dramatic art.

Captain Cyril Wilde, the hero, or rather the victim of the events we are about to narrate, was one of those perfectly happy men whom every one has learned to regard as favourites of Fortune, and on whom no one ever expects disaster to fall, simply because it never has done so. Well descended, at a period when good birth was a positive honour in itself, and connected, either by affinity or friendship, with the best society of Kentucky, he held, by hereditary right, a high position among that old aristocracy, which then, and for a long time afterward, stoutly maintained its own against the encroaching spirit of democratic equality, and whose members still kept in mind many of the traditions, honoured in their own persons the dignity, and strove to preserve in their households somewhat of the manners of the Cavaliers of the Old Dominion. Nor was wealth wanting to complete his happiness—at

least, such wealth as was needed by one of his simple tastes and unostentatious habits. He was rich beyond his disposition to spend, but not beyond his capacity to enjoy—a capacity multiplied by as many times as he had friends to stimulate it—summer friends, alas! too many of them proved to be. His character was without reproach; his disposition easy and genial; his mind of that happy middle order which always commands respect, while it feels none of the restless ambition and impotent longing for public recognition that usually attend the possession of superior abilities.

Such was the position of Captain Wilde, and such the character he bore during the first thirty-eight years of his life. Not many have known a more lengthened prosperity,—and few, very few, a more sudden and terrible reverse. Fortune, like a fond mistress, had lavished her gifts on him without stint; but, like a jealous one, seemed resolved that he should owe everything to her gratuitous bounty, and the moment he sought to win an object of desire by his own exertions, turned her face away for ever, persecuting her former favourite thenceforth with vindictive malice. Continuing to yield for a time, with apparent complacency, every boon he sought, she treacherously concealed therein the germs of all his woes.

In the year 17— Captain Wilde was persuaded to better his already happy condition by marriage. The lady he chose, or suffered to be chosen for him, was a Miss M—, a scion of one of those extensive families, not now so common as formerly, which by repeated intermarriage and always settling together develop a spirit of clanship so exclusive as to make them almost incapable of any feeling of interest outside of their own name and connexion, and render them liable to regard any person of different blood, who may happen to intermarry among them, as an intruder. In some parts of the Union these clans may still be found flourishing in considerable purity and vigour—the same name sometimes prevailing over a district of many miles—a fact which an observant traveller would surmise from a certain prevailing cast of form and feature.

It was with a family of this kind that Captain Wilde was, in an evil hour, induced to ally himself—a step which soon proved to be the first in a long career of misfortune. The lady possessed that worst of all tempers, a quick and irritable, but at the same time hard and unforgiving one. And she soon showed, that in her estimation, the feelings and interests of her husband were as nothing in comparison with those of her family, and that in any variance, she would leave the former and cleave to the latter. Such variances were, unfortunately, almost inevitable; for the family of Mrs. Wilde differed both in politics and religion from her husband—a fact, it may here be remarked, which had no small influence on his subsequent fate—and the narrow, bigoted exclusiveness of the wife was utterly incompatible with the free and open-hearted fellowship with which the husband received his acquaintances, of whatever sect or party. In a very few months, therefore, it began to be whispered abroad that the hitherto happy and joyous bachelor's hall had become a scene of constant bickering and heartburnings.

But mere incongruity of tempers and habits was not, as was supposed by their neighbours, the only source of domestic discord. This might in time have entirely disappeared; had conjugal confidence only been allowed its natural growth, all might have been passably well in the end, in spite of such serious drawbacks; for, from the necessity of his nature, the husband would in time have become completely subservient to the sterner spirit of his wife, which, in turn, might have been modified in some degree amid the peaceful duties of home—a state of things that has existed in many families, which have nevertheless enjoyed a fair share of domestic happiness in spite of this inversion of the natural relations of their heads. But Mrs. Wilde had brought into her husband's house that deadliest foe of domestic peace, an elderly, ill-tempered, suspicious female relative, serving in the capacity of *confidante*. This curse was embodied in the person of a much older sister, who happened to be neither maid, wife, nor widow, and, having once effected an entrance under the pretence of assisting to arrange the disordered household affairs, easily contrived to render her position a permanent one. So soon as this was achieved, she appears to have begun her hateful work of sowing discord be-

tween the new-married pair. Having long since blighted her own hopes of happiness, she seemed to find no consolation so sweet as wrecking that of others; not that she had no love for her sister; on the contrary, her love, such as it was, was really strong and lasting; and in her fierce grief for that sister's death she met a punishment almost equal to her deserts. Nor was it long before she provided herself with a most effectual means of accomplishing her malicious object of inflaming the troubles of the household into which she had intruded herself. This was the discovery, real or pretended, of a former illicit connexion between her brother-in-law and a pretty and intelligent mulatto girl, about eighteen or nineteen years of age, who was still retained in the family in the capacity of housemaid. Having once struck this jarring chord, she continued to play upon it with diabolical skill. To those who watched the course of her unholy labours, the energy and ingenuity with which this wretched woman wrought at her task, and the completeness of her success, would have seemed a subject of admiration, if the result had not been so deplorable as to merge all other emotions in indignant detestation.

So thoroughly had her design been accomplished in the course of a single year, that the birth of as sweet a child as ever smiled upon fond parents, instead of serving as a point of union between Captain Wilde and his wife, only increased their estrangement by furnishing another subject of contention. Alas! the peace of Eden was not more utterly destroyed by the treacherous wiles of the serpent than that of this ill-starred household by the whispers of this serpent in woman's shape. Under her continual exasperations, Mrs. Wilde's temper, naturally harsh, became at last so outrageous and unbridled as to render her unfortunate husband's life one long course of humiliation and misery. Far from taking any pains to hide their discords from the world, she seemed to court observation by seizing every opportunity of inflicting mortification upon him in public, reckless of the reflections such improprieties might bring upon herself.

But why, it may be asked, did not both parties seek a separation, when affairs had reached such a state as this? First, because Captain Wilde, though advised thereto, naturally shrank from the scandal

such a step always occasions; and, on the other side, because his wife was gifted with one of those intolerable tempers that make some women cling to a partner they hate with a jealous tenacity which love could scarcely inspire, simply for the reason that a separation would put an end to their power, so dearly prized, of inflicting pain; for hatred has its jealousy as well as love.

Of the perverse ingenuity of these two women in causing the deepest mortification to the unfortunate gentleman, whenever Fate and his own weakness gave them the power, we will notice one instance, on account of the important influence it had in bringing about the *dénouement* of this domestic tragedy.

According to the kindly custom of that time, Captain Wilde had on one occasion requested the assistance of some of his neighbours in treading out his grain; and the party had set to work at dawn, in order to avail themselves of the cooler portion of the day. After waiting with longing ears for the sound of the breakfast-horn, they finally, at a late hour, repaired to the house, uncalled. Here the host, supposing all to be ready, led his friends unceremoniously into the dining-room, where he was astonished, and not a little angered, to find his wife and sister seated composedly at their meal, which they had already nearly finished, with only the three customary plates on the table, and no apparent preparation for a larger number. On his beginning to remonstrate in a rather heated tone, his wife arose, and, remarking that she had not been used to eat in company with common labourers, swept disdainfully from the room, followed by her sister. No more unpardonable insult could have been offered to Kentucky farmers, at the very foundation of whose social creed lay the principle of equality; and of whose character an intense and jealous feeling of personal dignity was the most salient feature: for these were men of independent means, who had come rather to superintend the labours of their negroes than to labour themselves,—such occasions being regarded only as pleasant opportunities for free and unrestrained sociability, far more agreeable than formal and ceremonious visits. On these occasions the host would conduct his friends over his farm to survey the condition of his crops, or point out to their admiration his fine cattle, or obtain their opinion

concerning some contemplated improvement; a most admirable means of drawing closer the bonds of neighbourly feeling and interest. A more bitter mortification, therefore, could hardly have been devised for one who always prided himself on his open hearted Kentucky hospitality even to strangers. Justly enraged by such foolish and ill-timed rudeness, he flung a knife, which he had idly taken up, violently upon the table, swearing that his friends should, in his house, be treated as gentlemen; at the same time calling to the mulatto, Fanny, he bade her prepare breakfast, and added, in a tone but half-suppressed, "You are the only woman on the place who behaves like a lady." This imprudent remark was overheard by the ever-present sister-in-law, and the use she made of it may be imagined.

In this unpleasant state of his domestic relations, the character of Captain Wilde seemed to undergo an entire transformation. From being remarkable for his love of quiet retirement, he became restless and dissatisfied; and, instead of laughing, as formerly, at public employment as only vanity and vexation, he, now that a greater vexation assailed him in his once peaceful home, eagerly sought relief, not, as a younger or less virtuous man might have done, in dissipation, but in the distractions of public business. But here again his evil fortune granted the desired boon in a shape pregnant with future disaster. The hostility of Mrs. Wilde's family, which had now become deeply excited, combined with his own political heterodoxy, forbade any hope of attaining a place by popular choice; and in an evil hour his friends succeeded in procuring him the office of exciseman.

Now there is no peculiarity more marked in all the branches of the Anglo-Saxon race than the extreme impatience with which they submit to any direct interference of the government in the private affairs of the citizens; and no form of such interference has ever been so generally odious as the excise, and, by consequence, no officer so generally detested as the exciseman. This feeling, on account of the very large number of persons engaged in distilling, was then formidably strong in Kentucky—all the more so that this form of taxation was a favourite measure of the existing Federal administration. Those who ventured to accept so hateful an office at the hands of so hated a government were sure to make

themselves highly unpopular. In time, when the people began to learn their own strength and the weakness of the authorities, the enforcement of the law became dangerous, and at last altogether impossible. The writer has been told by a gentleman holding a responsible position under our judicial system, that the name of his grandfather—the last Kentucky exciseman—to this day stands charged on the government books with thousands of dollars arrears, although he was a man of great courage, and not at all likely to be deterred from the discharge of his duty by any ordinary obstacle.

Such was the place sought and obtained by the unfortunate Wilde as a refuge from domestic wretchedness. The consequence it was easy to foresee. In a few months, he who had been accustomed to universal good-will became an object of almost as general dislike; and as people are apt to attribute all sorts of evil to one who has by any means incurred their hostility, and are never satisfied until they have blackened the whole character in which they had found one offensive quality, the family difficulties of the unpopular official soon became a theme of common scandal, all the blame, of course, being laid upon him. This state of things, disagreeable in itself, proved most unfortunate in its influence on his subsequent fate; for, had he retained his previous popularity in the county, the last deplorable catastrophe would certainly never have happened; since every lawyer knows full well that, in capital cases especially, juries are merely the exponents of public sentiment, and that the power of any judge to cause excited sympathies of a whole community to sink into calm indifference at the railing of a jury-box is about as effective as was the command of the Dane in arresting the in-rolling waters of the ocean. This is peculiarly true in this country, where the people, both in theory and in fact, are so completely sovereign, that the institutions of government are only instruments, having little capability of independent, and none at all of antagonistic action. The skilful advocate, therefore, always watches the crowd of eager faces without the bar, with eye as anxious and far more prophetic than that with which he studies the formal countenances of the panel whom he directly addresses.

There was one circumstance, arising indirectly from his public employment, that exercised no trivial influence upon

Captain Wilde's fate. On one occasion, while engaged with a brother-official in arranging their books preparatory to the annual settlement, his wife, becoming enraged because he failed to attend instantly to her orders concerning some trifling domestic matter, rushed into his study and caught up an armful of papers, which she attempted to throw into the fire. The documents were of great importance; and to prevent her carrying her childish purpose into execution, her husband was obliged to seize her quickly and violently, and drag her from the hearth. The reader will hardly recognise this incident in the form in which it was afterwards detailed from the witness-stand; and it is only on account of the effect which this and other occurrences of like nature had in bringing about the final event of our history, that we take the trouble to narrate matters so trifling and uninteresting; for it appeared that every incident of the kind was carefully registered in the memory of the *Erinnys* of this devoted household, whence it came out magnified and distorted into a brutal and unprovoked outrage.

Wretched indeed must have been the state of that family in which such scenes were allowed to meet the eyes of strangers; and again it may be asked, Why did not Captain Wilde take measures to dissolve a union that had resulted in so much unhappiness, and in which all hope of improvement must now have disappeared? Such a step would certainly have been wise; nor could the strictest moralist have found aught to censure therein. But it was now too late. No observer of human affairs has failed to notice how surely a stronger character gains ascendency over a weaker with which it is brought into familiar contact. No law of man can abrogate this great law of Nature. Talk as we may about the power of knowledge or intellect or virtue, the whole ordering of society shows that it is strength of character which fixes the relative *status* of individuals. In whatever community we may live, we need only look around to discover that its real leaders are not the merely intelligent, educated, and good, but the energetic, the self-asserting, the aggressive. Nor will mere passive strength of will prevent subjection; for how often do we see a spirit, whose only prominent characteristic is a restless and tireless pugnacity, hold in complete subserviency those who are far superior in

actual strength of mind, purely through the apathy of the latter, and their indisposition to live in a state of constant effort! It is because this petty domineering temper is found much oftener in women than in men, that we see a score of henpecked husbands to one ill-used wife. Woe to the man who falls into this kind of slavery to a wicked woman! for through him she will commit acts she would never dare in her own person; and a double woe to him, if he be not as wicked and hardened as his mistress! The bargain of the old Devil-bought magicians was profitable compared with his, since he gets nothing whatever for the soul he surrenders up.

In the present case, a couple of years sufficed for the energetic and ever-belligerent temper of the wife to subdue completely the mild and peaceable nature of the husband. At her bidding most of his former acquaintances were discarded; and even his warmest friends and nearest relations, no longer meeting the old hearty welcome, gradually ceased to visit his house. But the bitterest effect of this weak and culpable abdication of his rights was experienced by his slaves. Sad, indeed, for them was the change from the ease and abundance of the bachelor's-hall, where slavery meant little more than a happy exemption of care, to their present condition, in which it meant hopeless submission to the power of a capricious and cruel mistress. The worst form of female tyranny is that exhibited on a Southern plantation, under the sway of a termagant. Her power to afflict is so complete and all-pervading, that not an hour, nay, hardly a minute of the victim's life is exempt, if the disposition exist to exercise it. Besides, this species of domestic oppression has this in common with all the worst tyrannies which have been most feared and hated by men: the severities are ordered by those who neither execute them nor witness their execution,—that being left to agents, usually hardened to their office, and who dare not be merciful, even if so inclined. It adds twofold to the bitterness of such tyranny, that the tyrant is able to acquire a sort of exemption from the weakness of pity. It is wisely ordered that a few human beings shall feel aught but pain in looking upon the extreme bodily anguish of their fellow-men; and when a monster appears who seems to contradict this benign law, he is embalmed as a *monster*, and trans-

mitted to future times along with such *raræ aves* as Caligula, Domitian, and Nana Sahib. And here—as a Southern man, brought up in the midst of a household of slaves—let me remark, that the worst feature of our system of slavery is the possibility of the negroes falling into the hands of a brutal owner capable of exercising all the power of inflicting misery which the law gives him.

But the natural law of compensation is universal; and if the most wretched object in existence be a slave subject to the sway of a brutal owner, certainly the next is the humane master who has to do with a sullen, malicious, or dishonest negro,—while for one instance of the former, there are a hundred of the latter who would willingly give up the whole value of their human chattels in order to get rid of the vexations they occasion. And where master and man were equally bad, we have known cases in which it was really hard to say which contrived to inflict most misery: the one might get used to blows and curses so as not much to mind them, but the other could never escape the agonies of rage into which his contumacious chattel was able to throw him at any time.

Captain Wilde's temper was more than usually mild and lenient; and he was probably the most wretched being on his own plantation during the last two years of his life,—a day seldom passing that he was not compelled to inflict some sort of punishment upon his negroes. These, however, never ceased to feel for him the respectful attachment inspired by his kindness during the happy years of his bachelor-life; but, strange as it may seem, that feeling was now mingled with a sort of pity; for they well knew the painful reluctance with which he obeyed the harsh commands of his wife. And of all who mourned the hapless fate of this unfortunate gentleman, none mourned more bitterly, and few cherished his memory so long or so tenderly as these humble dependents, who best knew his real character.

But it was upon the mulatto girl Fanny, particularly, that the tyrannical cruelty of Mrs. Wilde was poured out in all its severity. From some cause,—whether because her duties rendered her more liable to commit irritating faults, or whether, being always in sight, she was simply the most convenient object of abuse, or whether on account of the alleged former intimacy between this girl

and her master,—certain it is that the hatred with which the mistress pursued her had something in it almost diabolical. And she seemed to take a peculiar satisfaction in making her husband the instrument of her persecutions: an ingenious method of punishing both her victims, if the motive were the last of those above suggested. And truly bitter it must have been to both, when the hand that had been only too kind was now forced to the infliction even of stripes; so that one hardly knows which to pity most: though, if the essence of punishment be degradation, certainly the legal slave suffered less of it than the moral one who had fallen so low beneath the dominion of a termagant wife. But let it be ever remembered to the honour of this wretched daughter of bondage, that, in spite of all, she never lost that devoted attachment for her master which in one of a more favoured race might be called by a softer name. For, whatever may have been his feelings towards her, there can remain no doubt of the nature of hers for him,—so touchingly displayed at a subsequent period, when she cast away the terror of violent death, so strong in all her race, and sought, by a voluntary confession of guilt never imputed to her, to save him by taking his place upon the scaffold. Surely such heroic self-sacrifice suffices to

“sublime
Her dark despair and plead for its one crime.”

It was probably on a discovery of this feeling in the girl that the intermeddling sister-in-law founded her charge against the master.

But there is a point beyond which human endurance cannot go,—at which milder natures turn to voluntary death as a refuge from further suffering, and fiercer ones begin to contemplate crime with savage complacency. Towards this point the ruthless and persevering cruelty of these two women was now rapidly driving their wretched victim; and soon, very soon, they were to learn that they had been hunting, not a lamb, but a tigress, whose single spring, when brought to bay, would be as quick, as sure, and as deadly as was ever made from an Indian jungle. For now, near the end of the third year of Captain Wilde's married life, its wretched scenes of discord and tyranny were about to be closed in a catastrophe that was to overwhelm a great community

with consternation and horror, and blot an entire family out of existence almost in a single night,—a catastrophe in which Providence, true to that ideal of perfect justice called poetical, working out the punishment of two of the actors by means of their own inhumanity, at the same time mysteriously involved two others,—one clothed in all the innocence of infancy, and the other guilty only through weakness and as the instrument of another. Seldom has destruction been more sudden or more complete, and never, perhaps, was so annihilating a blow dealt by so weak a hand.

Those who remember the early times of Kentucky know that the place of the agricultural and mechanics' fairs of the present day was supplied by “big meetings,” which, under the various names of associations, camp meetings, and basket-meetings, continued in full popularity to a quite recent period, and were at last partially suppressed on account of the immorality which they occasioned and encouraged. It was to these holy fairs—as now to secular ones—that the wealth and fashion of early Kentucky crowded for the purpose of displaying themselves most conspicuously before the eyes of assembled counties. Mrs. Wilde, like most women of her temper, was passionately fond of such public triumphs, and had determined, at a camp-meeting soon to be held in the vicinity, to outshine all her rural neighbours in splendour. For the full realization of this ambition, a new carriage was, in her opinion, absolutely necessary. This fact she communicated to her husband, and upon some demur on his part—a thing now very rare—her temper, as usual, broke forth in a storm of reproach and abuse, so that the poor man, completely subdued, was glad to purchase peace by acquiescence in what his judgment regarded as a foolish expense; and he prepared immediately to set off for L— to procure the coveted vehicle. But before he had mounted, his wife, yet hot from their recent altercation, discovered or affected to discover some negligence on the part of the mulatto girl, who was engaged in nursing the child, which was at this time suffering from a dangerous illness. Now the one tender trait of this violent woman was intense love for her offspring; but it was a love that, far from softening her manner toward others, partook, on the contrary, of the fierceness of her general

character, and became, like that of a wild animal for its young, a source of constant apprehension to those whose duty compelled them to approach its object. So now, seizing the weeping culprit by the hair, she dragged her to the door, and after exhausting her own powers of maltreatment, called to her husband and ordered him to bring, on his return, a new cowhide,—“For you shall,” cried she, in uncontrollable rage, “give this wretch, in the morning, two hundred lashes!” It was a brutal threat, falling from the lips of one who was called a lady: for of all tortures that of the cowhide is for the moment the most intolerable, in its sharp, penetrating agony, as is well known by those who remember even a moderate application of it to their own person in schoolboy days. The victim knew that the execution of the barbarous menace would be strict to the letter, and that it would be but little preferable to death itself. Yet, in spite of this, she now, for the first time, failed to cower and tremble, but arose and faced her oppressor, erect and defiant. The last drop had now been dashed into the cup of endurance,—the final blow had been struck, under which the human spirit either falls crushed and prostrated for ever, or from which it springs up tempered to adamantine hardness, and incapable thenceforth of feeling either fear for itself or pity for its smiter. That one moment had entirely reversed the relations of the two, making the slave mistress of her mistress’s fate, while the latter thenceforward held her very existence at the will of her slave. The cruel woman had raised up for herself that enemy more terrible even to throned tyrants than an army with banners: for there is something truly terrific in the almost omnipotent power of harm possessed by any intelligent being, whom hatred, or fanaticism, or suffering has wound up to that point of desperation where it is willing to throw away its own life in order to reach that of an adversary,—such desperation as inspired the gladiator Maternus, in his romantic expedition from the woods of Transylvania through the marshes of Pannonia and the Alpine passes, to strike the lord of the Roman world in the recesses of his own palace, and in the presence of his thousand guards. He who has provoked such hostility can know no safety but in the destruction of his enemy,—a fact well understood by the elder Napoleon, who,

however he might admire, never pardoned those whose attempts on his person showed them utterly reckless of the safety of their own.

And now, for a few hours, the whole interest of our narrative centres in her whom that moment had so completely transformed and made already a murderer in heart and in purpose. And how thoroughly must that heart have been steeled, and how entire must have been the banishment of all counteracting feelings, when she could for a whole day, in the midst of a household of fellow-servants, and under the watchful eyes of an angry mistress, continue to discharge her usual tasks, bearing this deadly purpose in her breast, yet never, by word, look, or gesture, betray the slightest indication of its dreadful secret,—no, not even so much as to draw suspicion toward herself after the discovery of the crime! There was no time or opportunity for preparation, of which little was indeed necessary; for human life is a frail thing, and a determined hand is always strong. She had already undergone the most effectual preparation for such a task,—that of the soul; and when that is once thoroughly accomplished, not much more is needed: a fact which seems not to be understood by those patriotic assassins—French and Italian—whose elaborately contrived infernal-machines do but betray the anxious precautions taken to insure lives which, according to their own professions, have been rendered valueless by tyranny, and ought therefore to be the more freely risked. Felton and Charlotte Corday understood their business better; but even their preparations may be called elaborate, compared with those of this poor slave-girl.

Captain Wilde returned late in the evening with the coveted coach; and the whole family, white and black, of course turned out to admire that crowning addition to the family splendour. But among the noisy group of the latter there stood one who gazed upon the object of admiration with thoughts far different from those of her companions; and soon the careless mirth of all was checked and chilled into silent fear, when they saw their master take from beneath one of the seats a new specimen of the well-known green cow-skin, and hand it, with a troubled, deprecating look, to his wife. Ah! they all knew that appealing look well, and the hard, relentless frown by

which it was answered, as well as they knew the use of the dreaded instrument itself. But there was only one among them who comprehended its immediate purpose. The glance of cruel meaning which the tyranness, after having examined the lithe, twisted rod critically for an instant, cast upon the object of her malice, probably banished the last lingering hesitation from the breast of the latter,—who turned away ostensibly to the performance of her accustomed duties, but in reality to settle the details of a crime unsurpassed in coolness and resolution by aught recorded of pirate or highwayman. It was probably during the hours immediately succeeding Captain Wilde's return that her deadly purpose shaped itself forth in the plan finally executed; because it was not till then that she became cognizant of all the circumstances which entered into its formation. Seldom have more nicely calculated combinations entered into the plots of criminals, and never was a plot depending on so many chances more completely successful. Yet the pivot of the whole, as often in more extensive schemes of homicide, is to be found in the reckless daring and utter disregard of personal safety manifested throughout. For this alone she seems to have made no calculations and taken no precautions; her whole mind being bent apparently on the solution of one single difficulty—how to approach her enemy undetected.

As to the details of this affair, let us mention one or two facts, and then the conduct of the murderer will itself explain them. We have already stated that the only child of Captain and Mrs. Wilde, an infant about eighteen months old, was at this time dangerously ill. For a fortnight it had been the custom of the parents to sit up with it on alternate nights, this night it being the father's regular turn to perform that duty; but his trip of twenty-five or thirty miles had fatigued him so much that it was judged best for his wife to relieve him,—his slumbers being usually so profound as to be almost lethargic, so that when once fairly asleep, the loudest noises even in the same room would fail to arouse him, and it being feared, therefore, that the little patient might suffer, if left to his care in his present state of weariness. In the same room slept a young negro girl, whose duty it was to carry the child into the open air when occasion required,

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—an office which Fanny herself had more than once performed. The reader will note how ingeniously every one of these circumstances was woven into the girl's scheme of death, and how each was made subservient to the end in view.

At ten o'clock on the night of the 18th of July, 17—, everything had become quiet about that lonely farmhouse, so completely isolated in the midst of its wide plantation that the barking of the dogs at the nearest dwellings was barely heard in the profound stillness. A dim light, as if from a deeply shaded candle, shone from one of the casements to the right of the hall-door, showing where the parents watched by the bed of their suffering infant. Along the high-road, which, a few rods in front, stretched white and silent in the moonlight between its long lines of worm-fences, a solitary traveller on horseback was journeying at this hour. This gentleman afterwards remembered being more than usually impressed by the air of peace and repose that reigned about the place, as he rode under the tall locust-trees which skirted the yard and cast their dark shadows over into the highway. But he did not see a female form flitting furtively from the negro-quarters in the rear toward the house; and a shade of suspicion might have crossed his mind, had he glanced back a moment later and beheld that form approach the lighted window with stealthy, cautious steps, and peer long and intently through the partially drawn curtains upon the scene within; then, stooping low, glide along the moonlit wall, and disappear beneath the short flight of wooden steps that led up to the front door.

Here ensconced, safe from observation, the murderer lay listening to every sound in the sick-room above. Ten—eleven—twelve—one—sounded from the clock in the dining-room on the other side of the hall. For three hours has she crouched there, but the opportunity she expected has not yet come. The moon was setting, and deep darkness beginning to envelop the earth, when, just as she was about to steal forth and regain her cabin unobserved, the door above her head opened, and the young negro nurse, still half-asleep, came forth, stood for a moment upon the topmost step to recover her senses, and then, with the wailing infant in her arms, descended and passed round

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the corner of the house. She had barely disappeared when the murderer crept from her lair, and, swift and noiseless as a serpent or a cat, glided up the steps through the open door, and in another moment had again concealed herself beneath the leaves of a large table that stood in the hall close to the door of the sick-room, which, standing ajar, gave her an opportunity of studying once more the situation of things within. In the corner farthest from her lurking-place stood the bed on which her master was slumbering, concealing with its curtains the front-window against which it was placed. At the foot of this, under the other front-window, was the pallet of the nurse, and midway between it and the door through which she peered was the low trundle-bed of the sick child, on which at this moment lay the mother—soon to become a mother again; while at the farther end of the room a candle was burning dimly upon the hearth. Thus, for half an hour, the murderer crouched within a few feet of her victim and watched, noting every circumstance with the eye of a beast of prey about to spring. At the end of that time the nurse returned, placed the quieted child beside its mother, and, closing the door, retired to her own pallet, whence her loud breathing almost immediately told that she was asleep. Still with bated breath the mulatto waited, stooping with her ear at the key-hole till the regular respirations of the mother and the softened panting of the little invalid assured her that all was safe. Then, at last, turning the handle of the latch silently and gradually, she glided into the room, and stood by the side of her victim.

The whole range of imaginative literature cannot furnish an incident of more absorbing interest; nor can the whole history of the theatre exhibit a situation of mere tremendous scenical power than was presented at this moment in that chamber of doom. The four unconscious sleepers with the murderer in the midst of them, bending with hard, glittering eyes over her prey; while around them all the huge shadows cast by the dim, untrimmed light, like uncouth monsters, rose, flitted, and fell, as if in a goblin-dance of joy, over the scene of approaching guilt. Sleep, solemn at any time, becomes almost awful when we gaze upon it amid the stillness of night, so mysterious is it, and so near akin to the deeper

mystery of death—so peaceful, with a peace so much like that of the grave: men could scarcely comprehend the idea of the one, if they were not acquainted with the reality of the other. There lay the mother, with her arms around her sleeping child, whose painful breathing showed that it suffered even while it slept. Such a spectacle might have moved the hardest heart to pity; but it possessed no such power over that of the desperate slave, whose vindictive purpose never wavered for an instant. Passing round the bed, she stooped and softly encircled the emaciated little neck with her fingers. One quick, strong gripe—the poor, weak hands were thrown up, a soft gasp and a slight spasm, and it was done. The frail young life, which had known little except suffering, and which disease would probably have extinguished in a few hours or days, was thus at once and almost painlessly cut short by the hand of violence.

And now at last the way was clear. “I knew,” said she, afterwards, “the situation of my mistress; and I thought that by jumping upon her with my knees I should kill her at once.” Disturbed by the slight struggle of the dying child, Mrs. Wilde moved uneasily for a moment, and again sunk into quietude, lying with her face—that hard, cold face—upward. This was the opportunity for the destroyer. Bounding with all her might from the floor, she came down with bended knees upon the body of her victim. But the shock, though severe, was not fatal; and with a loud cry of “Oh, Captain Wilde, help me!” she, by a convulsive effort, threw her assailant to the floor. Though stunned and bewildered by the suddenness and violence of the attack, the wretched woman in that terrible moment recognised her enemy, and felt the desperate purpose with which she was animated—and so recognising and so feeling, must have known in that momentary interval all that the human soul can know of despair and terror. But it was only for a moment; for, before she could utter a second cry for help, the baffled assailant was again upon her with the bound of a tigress. A blind and breathless struggle ensued between the desperate ferocity of the slave and the equally desperate terror of the mistress; while faster and wilder went the huge, dim shadows in their goblin-dance, as the yellow flame flared and flickered in the agitated air. For a few moments, indeed, the result of the

struggle seemed doubtful; and Mrs. Wilde at length, by a violent effort, raised herself almost upright, with the infuriated slave still hanging to her throat; but the latter converted this into an advantage, by suddenly throwing her whole weight upon the breast of her mistress, thus casting her violently backward across the head-board of the bed, and dislocating the spine. Another half-uttered cry, a convulsive struggle, and the deed was accomplished. One slight shiver crept over the limbs, and then the body hung limp and lifeless where it had fallen,—the head resting upon the floor, on which the long raven hair was spread abroad in a disordered mass. The victor gazed coolly on her work while recovering breath; and then, to make assurance doubly sure, took up, as she thought, a stocking from the bed, and deliberately tied it tight round the neck of the corpse. Then, gliding to the door, she quitted the scene of her fearful labours as noiselessly as she had entered, leaving behind her not one trace of her presence; but leaving, unintentionally, a most fatal false trace, which suspicion continued to follow until it had run an entirely innocent man to his grave. The last act of the drama of woman's passion and woman's revenge was over; the tragedy of man's suffering and endurance still went on.

How or by whom the terrible spectacle in that chamber of death was first discovered we are not told. All we know, from the reports of the negroes, is, that Captain Wilde, who seemed stupified at first, suddenly passed into a state of excitement little short of distraction—now raving, as if to an imaginary listener, and then questioning and threatening those about him with incoherent violence. To these simple observers such conduct was entirely incomprehensible; but we may easily suppose that at this moment the unfortunate man first realized the fearful nature of the circumstances which surrounded him, and perceived the abyss which had yawned so suddenly at his feet. And no wonder that he shrank back from the prospect, overwhelmed for the moment with consternation and despair,—not the prospect of death, but of a degradation far worse to the proud spirit of the Kentucky gentleman, on whose good name even political hatred had never been able to fix a stain.

The terrified negroes carried the alarm to the nearest neighbours, and soon the

report of this appalling occurrence was flying like lightning toward the utmost bounds of the county. The first stranger who reached the scene of death was Mr. Summers, formerly an intimate friend of Captain Wilde. When he entered the room he found the poor gentleman on his knees beside the body of his child, with his face buried in the bedclothes. At the sound of footsteps he raised his wild, tearless eyes, exclaiming, "My God! my God! Mr. Summers, my wife has been murdered here, in my own room, and it will be laid on me!" Shocked by the almost insane excitement of his old friend, and sensible of the imprudence of his words, Summers begged him to compose himself, pointing out the danger of such language. But the terrible thought had mastered his mind with a monomaniacal power, and to every effort at consolation from those who successively came in, the only reply was, "Oh, my God! it will all be laid upon me!" Fortunately, those who heard these expressions were old friends, who, although they had been long unfamiliar, knew the native uprightness of the man, and still felt kindly toward one whose estrangement they knew was the effect of weak submission to the dictation of his wife, not the result of any change in his own feelings. They regarded his wild words as only the incoherent utterances of a mind bewildered by horror, and were anxious to put an end to the harrowing scene, and remove the stricken man as soon as possible from the observation of a mixed crowd that was now rapidly assembling from all directions, many of whom knew Captain Wilde only in his unpopular capacity of exciseman, and would therefore be apt to suspect a darker explanation of his strange behaviour.

So shocking had been the sight presented to their eyes on entering the room, that hitherto no one had had sufficient presence of mind to examine the bodies closely; but at last Mr. Summers, cooler than the rest, approached to raise that of Mrs. Wilde, and then, for the first time, perceived the bandage about her neck. It proved to be a *white silk neckerchief*, which Summers removed and began to examine. As he did so, his face was seen to grow suddenly pale as death. All pressed anxiously forward to see, and a silent but fearfully significant look passed round the circle; for in one corner, embroidered in large letters, was the name of *Cyril Wilde*. As silently every eye

sought the devoted man, and on many countenances the look of doubt settled at once into one of conviction, when they saw that he wore no cravat; and to many ears the heartbroken moan of the wretched husband and father, which a moment before seemed only the foreboding of oversensitive innocence, now sounded like the voice of self-accusing guilt. So great is the power of imagination in modifying our beliefs!

After such a discovery an arrest followed as a matter of course, and a popular feeling adverse to the accused quickly manifested itself in the community. But it is pleasant to know that, in spite of all appearances, many of Captain Wilde's old friends never lost faith in his innocence, or hesitated to renew in his hour of adversity the kindly relations that had existed before his marriage; while his own kindred stood by him and bravely fought his hopeless battle to the last—employing as his advocate the celebrated John Breckenridge, who was then almost without a rival at the Kentucky bar. But, on the other hand, his wife's family pursued their unfortunate relative with a savageness of hatred hardly to be paralleled. Having hunted him to the very foot of the scaffold, their persevering malice seemed unsated even by the sight of their victim suspended as a felon before their very eyes; for it was reported at the time, that two of the murdered woman's brothers were seen upon the ground during the execution.

And now it was that the unpopularity resulting from Captain Wilde's official employment manifested its most baleful effects. Had he possessed at this crisis the same general goodwill he had enjoyed four years before, he might have bid defiance to the rage of his enemies, and have escaped, in spite of all the suspicious circumstances by which he stood environed. For the general drift of sentiment in the West has always been against capital penalties, and it is next to impossible to carry such penalties into effect against a popular favourite. In a country like this we might as soon expect to see the hands of a clock move in a direction contrary to the machinery by which it is governed, as a jury to run counter to plainly declared popular feelings. There may now and then be instances of their acquitting contrary to the general sentiment, where that sentiment is unimpassioned; but we much doubt whether there has ever occurred a

single example of a jury convicting a person in whose favour the sympathy of a whole community was warmly and earnestly expressed. Of such sympathy Captain Wilde had none; for to the great majority he was known only as the exciseman, and as such was an object of hostility. Not that this hostility at any time took the form of insult and abuse—for we are proud to say that outside of the large towns such disgraceful exhibitions of feeling are unknown—but it left the minds of the general mass liable to be operated on by all the suspicious circumstances of the case, and by the slanders of the personal enemies of the accused.

On the 23rd of November an immense crowd of people, both men and women, were assembled in the court-house at— to witness a trial which was to fix a dark stain on the judicial annals of Kentucky, and in which, for the thousandth time, a court of justice was to be led fatally astray by the accursed thing called Circumstantial Evidence, and made the instrument of that most deplorable of all human tragedies—a formal, legalized murder. It is one of the most glaring inconsistencies of our law, that it admits, in a trial where the life of a citizen is at stake, a species of testimony which it regards as too inconclusive and too liable to misconstruction to be allowed in a civil suit, involving, it may be, less than the value of a single dollar. True, it is a favourite maxim of prosecutors, that "circumstances will not lie;" but it requires little acquaintance with the history of criminal trials to prove that circumstantial evidence has murdered more innocent men than all the false-witnesses and informers who ever disgraced courts of justice by their presence; and the slightest reflection will convince us that this shallow sophism contains even less practical truth than the general mass of proverbs and maxims, proverbially false though they be. For not only is the chance of falsehood, on the part of the witness who details the circumstances, greater—since a false impression can be conveyed with far less risk of detection, by distortion and exaggeration of a fact, than by the invention of a direct lie—but there is the additional danger of an honest misconception on his part; and every lawyer knows how hard it is for a dull witness to distinguish between the facts and his impressions of them, and how impossible it often is to make a witness detail the former without interpolating

the latter. But the greatest risk of all is that the jury themselves may misconstrue the circumstances, and draw unwarranted conclusions therefrom. It is an awful assumption of responsibility to leap to conclusions in such cases, and the leap too often proves to have been made in the dark. God help the wretch who is arraigned on suspicious appearances before a jury who believe that "circumstances won't lie!" for the Justice that presides at such a trial is apt to prove as blind and capricious as Chance herself. In reviewing the present trial in particular, one may well feel puzzled to decide which of these deities presided over its conduct. A Greek or Roman would have said, Neither,—but a greater than either, Fate; and we might almost adopt the old heathen notion, as we watch the downward course of the doomed gentleman from this point, and note how invariably every attempt to ward off destruction is defeated, as if by the persevering malice of some superior power. We shall soon see the most popular and influential attorney of the State driven from the case by an awkward misunderstanding; another, hardly inferior, expire almost in the very act of pleading it; and, finally, when the real criminal comes forward, at the last moment, to avert the ruin which she has involuntarily drawn down upon the head of her beloved master, and take his place upon the scaffold, we shall behold her heroic offer of self-sacrifice frustrated by influences the most unexpected—political influences which—with shame be it told—were sufficient to induce a governor of Kentucky to withhold the exercise of executive clemency, the most glorious prerogative intrusted to our chief magistrates, and which it ought to have been a most pleasing privilege to grant: for, incredible as it may seem, Governor — knew, when he signed the death-warrant, that the man he was consigning to an ignominious grave was innocent of the crime for which he was to suffer.

The trial was opened in the presence of a crowded assembly, among whom it was easy to discern that general conviction of the prisoner's guilt so chilling to the spirits of a defendant and his counsel, and so much deprecated by the latter, because he knows too well how far it goes toward a prejudgment of his cause. Several of the most prominent members of the bar had been retained by the family of Mrs. Wilde to assist the State's attor-

ney in the prosecution. In the defence John Breckenridge stood alone, needing no help; for all knew that whatever man could do in behalf of his client would be done by him. The prisoner himself, upon whom all eyes were turned, appeared dejected, but calm, like one who had resigned all hope. The ominous foreboding which had so overcome him on the fatal morning of the murder, had never left him for a single moment. From that hour he had looked upon himself as doomed, and had yielded only a passive acquiescence in the measures of defence proposed by his friends, awaiting the fate which he regarded as inevitable with a patience almost apathetic. Adversity brought out in bold relief qualities that might have sustained a cause whose victories are martyrdoms, but how useless to one requiring active heroism!

All the damaging facts attending the discovery of the murder—the failure of any signs of a stranger's presence in the apartment, the peculiar behaviour of the accused, the finding of his cravat on the neck of the corpse, his acknowledgment of having worn it on the previous day—were fully, but impartially, detailed by the witnesses for the Commonwealth. No one could deny that the circumstances were strongly against the prisoner: and these shadows, at best, and too often mere delusive mirages of truth, the law allows to be weighed against the life of a man. Against these shadows all the powers of Breckenridge were taxed to the uttermost; and he might have succeeded, for his eloquence was most persuasive, and his influence over the minds of the people nearly unlimited, had not a false-witness appeared to add strength by deliberate perjuries to a case already strong. It was the ungrateful sister-in-law of the accused, who had owed to him a home and an asylum from the merited scorn of her family and the world, who now came forward to complete the picture of her own detestable character, and put the finishing hand to her unhallowed work, by swearing away that life which her arts had rendered scarcely worth defending, could death have come unaccompanied by disgrace. With a manner betraying suppressed, but ill-concealed eagerness, and in language prompt and fluent, as if reciting by rote a carefully kept journal, she went on to detail every fault or neglect or impatient act of her relative, not sparing exposure of the most delicate

domestic events, at the same time carefully suppressing all mention of his provocations. In reply to the question, whether she had ever witnessed any violence that led her to fear personal danger to her sister, she replied, that, on one occasion, Captain Wilde, being displeased at something in relation to the preparation of a meal, seized a large carving-knife and flung it at his wife, who only escaped further outrage by flying from the house. On another occasion, she remembered, he became furiously angry because her sister wished him to see some guests, and, seizing her by the hair, dragged her to the door of his study, and cast her into the hall so violently that she lay senseless upon the floor until accidentally discovered,—her husband not even calling assistance. It is easy to imagine what an effect such exposures of the habitual brutality of the man, narrated by a near relation of the sufferer, and interrupted at proper intervals by sobs and tears, would have upon an impulsive jury, obliged to derive their knowledge of the case wholly from such a source, and already strongly impressed by the circumstantial details with a presumption unfavourable to the defendant. Now, since there were other persons in the court-house who had witnessed these two scenes of alleged maltreatment, it may seem strange that they were not brought forward to contradict this woman on those two points, which would at once have destroyed the effect of her entire testimony,—the maxim, *Falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus*, being always readily applied in such cases. Had this been done, a reaction of popular feeling would almost certainly have followed in favour of the accused, which might have borne him safely through in spite of all the presumptive proof against him. For nothing is truer than Lord Clarendon's observation, that "when a man is shown to be less guilty than he is charged, people are very apt to consider him more innocent than he may actually be." But in this case the falsehood was secured from exposure by its very magnitude, until it was too late for such exposure to be of any benefit to the prisoner. The persons who had beheld the scenes as they really occurred never thought of identifying them with brutal outrages, now narrated under oath, at which their hearts grew hard toward the unmanly perpetrator as they listened.

Against the strong array of facts and

fictions presented by the prosecution the only circumstance that could be urged by the counsel for the prisoner was, that the child was murdered along with the mother; and this could only avail to strengthen a presumption of innocence, had innocence been otherwise rendered probable; but when a conviction of his guilt had been arrived at already, it merely served to increase the atrocity of his crime, and to insure the enforcement of its penalty.

After a two days' struggle, in which every resource of reason and eloquence was exhausted by the defendant's counsel, the judge proceeded to a summing-up which left the jury scarcely an option, even had they been inclined to acquit. The latter withdrew in the midst of a deep and solemn silence, while the respectful demeanour of the spectators showed that at last a feeling of pity was beginning to steal into their hearts for the unhappy gentleman, who still sat, as he had done during those two long days of suspense, with his face buried in his hands, as motionless as a statue. A profound stillness reigned in the hall during the absence of the jury, broken only occasionally by a stifled sob from some of the ladies present. After an absence of less than an hour the jury returned and handed in a written verdict; and as the fatal word "Guilty" fell from the white lips of the agitated clerk, the calmest face in that whole vast assembly was that of him whom it doomed to the ignominious death of a felon. And calm he had been ever since the dreadful morning of his arrest; for the vial of wrath had then been broken upon his head, and he had tasted the whole bitterness of an agony which can be endured but a short while, and can never be felt a second time. For, as intense heat quickly destroys the vitality of the nerves on which it acts, and as flesh once deeply cauterized by fire is thenceforth insensible to impressions of pain, so the soul over which one of the fiery agonies of life has passed can never experience a repetition thereof. Besides, it is well known that the anticipation of an unjust accusation is far more agitating to a virtuous man than the reality, which is sure to arouse that strange martyr-spirit wherewith injustice always arms its victim, and supported by which alone even the most timid men have often suffered with fortitude, and the most unworthy died with dignity.

At that time the judicial arrangements of Kentucky allowed an appeal in criminal cases from the Circuit to the District Court; and it was determined to carry this cause before the latter tribunal, Mr. Breckenridge declaring that he believed he should be able to reverse the verdict. On what ground he founded this opinion we do not know: whether he felt convinced that the local prejudice against his client and the influence of his enemies in the County of — had mainly contributed to bring about the unfavourable result of the present hearing, and he hoped to escape these adverse agencies by a change of venue,—or whether he counted on a change of public feeling, after the first burst of excitement had subsided, to hear him through,—or whether he had discovered the falsehood of the testimony of the sister-in-law,—or, finally, whether it was that he had obtained a clearer and more favourable insight into the case, and recognised grounds of hope therein,—it is impossible now to say. But it is certain, that to the defendant and his friends he declared his confidence of a final acquittal, if the cause were transferred to the appellate court; and John Breckenridge was not a man to boast emptily, or to hold out hopes which he knew could never be realized. But at this crisis occurred a strange misunderstanding, which drove from the support of the wretched victim of Fate the only man who thoroughly understood the case in all its minutest details, and would have been most likely to conduct it to a happy termination. When the preparations for the last struggle were almost completed, and the time set for the final trial drew near, Mr. McC—, who, as Captain Wilde's brother-in-law, had been most active and zealous in his behalf, was informed by some officious intermeddler that Breckenridge had said in confidential conversation among his friends, "that the case was entirely desperate, that he had no hope whatever of altering the verdict by an appeal, and the family would save money by letting the law take its course, there being no doubt of the justice of the sentence." Mr. McC—, believing that he might rely on the word of his informant, unfortunately, without making any inquiry as to the truth of the tale, and without assigning any reason, wrote to Mr. Breckenridge a curt letter of dismissal, and immediately employed George

— to conduct the further defence. This gentleman, surpassed by no man in Kentucky as a logician, lawyer, and orator, was inferior to the discarded attorney in that great requisite of a jury-lawyer, personal popularity, besides labouring under the disadvantage of being new to the case, and having but a short time to make himself acquainted with its details. Personal pique and professional punctilio of course withheld his predecessor from affording any further assistance or advice in a business from which he had been so summarily dismissed. We cannot now measure accurately the effect of this change of counsel; we only know that, at the time, it was considered most disastrous by those having the best opportunities of judging.

But if Mr. — went into the cause under this disadvantage, he was spurred on by the consideration that in his client he was defending a friend: for they had been friends in youth, and though long separated, the tie had never been interrupted. Hence he threw himself into the case with an ardour which money could never have inspired, and in the course of the few remaining days had succeeded in mastering all its essential points.

The interest excited by this second trial was as deep and far more widely spread than by the first. Few proceedings of the kind in Kentucky ever called together a crowd at once so large and intelligent, a great proportion being lawyers, who had been induced to attend by the desire to witness what it was expected would be one of the most brilliant efforts of an eminent member of their fraternity.

The principal difference between the two trials was, that, on this occasion, the testimony of the sister-in-law was much damaged by the exposure both of her exaggerations and suppressions of important facts touching the incident at the breakfast-table. Having inadvertently allowed herself to be drawn into particularizing so minutely as to fix the exact date, and so positively as to render retraction impossible, she was, to her own evident discomfiture, flatly contradicted by more than one of those present on that occasion, who described the scene as it actually occurred. Of course, after such a revelation of untruthfulness, her whole testimony became liable to suspicion, the more violent that the falsehood was plainly intentional. Moreover, the defendant was now provided with evidence of the

constant and intolerable provocations to which he had been subjected during the whole of his married life. Of this, however, the most moderate and guarded use was to be made; because, while it was necessary, by exposing the true character and habitual violence of his wife, to relieve the prisoner of that load of public indignation which had been excited against him on account of his alleged brutality, it was even more important that no strong resentment should be supposed to have grown up on his part against his tormentor. This delicate task was managed by the attorney with such consummate skill, that, when the evidence on both sides was closed, public sympathy, if not public conviction, had undergone a very perceptible change. The prosecutors, aware of this, felt the success of their case endangered, and exerted themselves to the utmost to prevent the tide, now almost in equilibrium, from ebbing back with a violence proportionate to that of its flow. But the argument even of their ablest champion, John —, seemed almost puerile in comparison with this the last effort of George —, —an effort which was long remembered, even less on account of its melancholy termination than for its extraordinary eloquence. The Kentuckians of that day were accustomed to hear Breckenridge, Clay, Talbot, Allen, and Grundy, all men of singular oratorical fame,—but never, we have heard it affirmed, was a more moving appeal poured into the ears of a Kentucky jury. Availing himself of every resource of professional skill, he now demonstrated, to the full satisfaction of many, the utter inadequacy of the circumstantial evidence upon which so much stress had been laid to justify a conviction,—sifting and weighing carefully every fact and detail, and trying the conclusions that had been drawn therefrom by the most rigorous and searching logic,—and then, assailing the credibility of the testimony brought forward to prove the habitual cruelty of his client, he gave utterance to a withering torrent of invective and sarcasm, in which the character of the main hostile witness shrivelled and blackened like paper in a flame. Then—having been eight hours on his feet—he began to avail himself of that last dangerous resource which genius only may use,—the final arrow in the lawyer's quiver, which is so hard to handle rightly, and, failing, may prove worse than useless, but, sped by a strong

hand and true aim, often tells decisively on a hesitating jury,—we mean, a direct appeal to their feelings. Like a skilful leader who gathers all his exhausted squadrons when he sees the crisis of battle approaching, the great advocate seemed now to summon every overtaxed power of body and spirit to his aid, as he felt that the moment was come when he must wring an acquittal from the hearts of his hearers. Nor did either soul or intellect fail at the call. Higher and stronger surged the tide of passionate eloquence, until every one felt that the icy barrier was beginning to yield,—for tears were already seen on more than one of the faces now leaning breathlessly forward from the jury-box to listen,—when all at once a dead silence fell throughout the hall: the voice whose organ-tones had been filling its remotest nook suddenly died away in a strange gurgle. Several physicians present immediately divined what had happened; nor were the multitude near kept long in doubt; for all saw, at the next moment, a crimson stream welling forth from those lips just now so eloquent,—checking their eloquence, alas, for ever! It was quickly reported through the assembly that the speaker had ruptured one of the larger blood-vessels in the lungs. The accident was too dangerous for delay, and George — was borne almost insensible from the scene of his struggles and his triumphs, to re-enter, as it proved, no more. He lived but three days longer,—long enough, however, to learn that he had sacrificed his life in vain, the jury having, after a lengthened consideration, affirmed the former verdict against his friend and client.

The unfortunate man stood up to receive this second sentence with the same face of impassive misery with which he had listened to the first. To the solemn mockery, "If he had anything to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon him," he shook his head wearily, and answered, "Nothing." It was evident that his mind was failing fast under the overwhelming weight of calamity. It was sad to see this high-born but ill-fated gentleman thus bowing humbly to a felon's doom; and the remembrance of that scene must have been a life-long remorse to his judges, when the events of a few weeks revealed to them the terrible truth, that he was innocent of the crime for which they had condemned him.

We will not dwell upon the events alluded to; for even at the distance of nearly three-quarters of a century they are too painful and humiliating. Suffice it to say, that, when the murdereress discovered that her beloved master was to suffer for her crime, and that no other chance of salvation remained, she made a full confession of the whole matter. But the sentence had been pronounced, and the power of suspending its execution rested with the Governor; and that dignitary —let his name, in charity, remain unsaid—was about to be a candidate for re-election to the office which he disgraced, while the family of the murdered lady was one of the most extensive and influential in the State, the whole of which influence was thrown into the scale against mercy and justice. With what result was seen, when, on the morning of the — of April, 17—, the prison-doors were opened for the last time for his passage, and Cyril Wilde was led forth to the execution of an iniquitous sentence, though, even while the sad cart was moving slowly, very slowly, through the crowded, strangely silent street, some of the very men who had pronounced it were imploring the Governor almost on their knees that it might be stayed. The prisoner alone seemed impatient to hasten the reluctant march, and meet the final catastrophe. He knew of the efforts that

were making to save him, and the confession on which they were founded. He had listened to hopeful words and confident predictions; but no expression of hope had thereby been kindled for an instant on his pale, dejected face. The ominous premonition which had come upon him at the moment of that first overpowering realization of his danger continued to gain strength with every successive stroke of untoward Fate, until it had become the ruling idea of his mind, in which there grew up the sort of desperate impatience with which we long for any end we know to be inevitable. The waters of his life had been so mingled with gall, and the bitter draught so long pressed to his lips, that now he seemed only eager to drain at once the last dregs, and cast the hated cup from him for ever,—impatient to find peace and rest in the grave, even if it were the grave of a felon, and at the foot of the gallows.

Here let the curtain fall upon the sad closing scene. We will only remark, in conclusion, that the name and family of this ill-fated victim of false and circumstantial evidence have long since disappeared from the land where they had known such disgrace; and but few persons are now living who can recall the foregoing details of the once celebrated “Wilde Tragedy.”

BRITTANY.

OF all the provinces of France, Brittany is, without exception, that one which has ever preserved most vividly the ancient impress of its national character. There, still exist, in almost unchanged purity, the wild and ardent superstitions, the curious festivals, and picturesque costumes, so prevalent during the Middle Ages. The remains of feudalism, though extinct in principle, yet ever living in several local customs, still exist there side-by-side with the simple traditions common to the first ages of the church. And even without pushing our examination further, we discover without difficulty, under several local customs and usages, the traces of a state of civilization anterior even to Christianity itself. The Druidical *menhir*, surmounted with its stone cross, which we see standing erect in the midst of some barren heath, or in the open space of some primæval forest, is the emblem of this land of Brittany, wherein all traditions exist, mingled and confounded together; where the histories of the *Iseults*, of Merlin, and of Lancelot, are linked with the miraculous Legends of the Saints, and with the belief in intermediary agency, introduced by Sabianism. If progress is slow, if civilization advances with halting footsteps, on the other hand, nothing perishes from out this sterile land. Out of the mass of the different traditions, collected by so many generations of people, so many successive civilizations, are formed those picturesque manners, strange customs, and local usages, so prevalent even at the present day in this Armorica, less isolated from the rest of the world by its geographical position than by its peculiar idiom, and its strange though national repugnances.

The Breton peasant is by nature frank, lively, and intelligent; he makes a good soldier, and an excellent sailor. And yet, with all this natural cheerfulness of disposition, he ever appears dull, listless, and melancholy, when away from the rude land which he loves to adoration. It is only in the midst of his desolate *landes*, or within hearing of the murmur of its shores, that he shows himself in all the energy of his active and vigorous character. Naturally gay and light-hearted, he seeks with avidity every ceremony in the shape of show or festival that is to be met with for miles round his native village. The harder, the more laborious, the more monotonous is

his every-day life, the more anxiously does he appear to seek in his games and festivals to escape its saddening influence.

All the more important circumstances and affairs of life, be they sad or gay, serve as so many pretexts for his rejoicings. It is the same also at the principal epochs of the year.

The gayest, the most cheerful of the many Breton festivals, are those which usher in the spring. Then, not a Sunday comes round without bringing with it its pilgrimage to some one of the numerous national saints, whose rustic chapel may be discerned in the neighbourhood of the village, rearing its belfry amid the sacred grove of patriarchal oaks by which it is surrounded. Women, children, the aged, the sick, all hasten to these festivals; and thither, also, the youthful villagers flock in crowds: the maidens, decked in holiday garments of the brightest hue; the youths, with peacocks' feathers twined round their broad-brimmed hats—all ripe for fun and frolic, dancing and love-making. Generally speaking, among the hardy and unsophisticated races of the country, love is a very simple and indeed insipid affair—it is rather an instinct than a passion; but in Brittany, the passion may be said to be in a manner elevated above this prosaic level, by the observance of certain customs, which contrast in a remarkable manner with those of countries in other respects more advanced in the arts of civilization. Each diocese, each parish even, has its own peculiar customs. Thus, for instance, there are certain can-tions of the Léonais, where the lover approaches his mistress in solemn silence. After a formal salutation, he takes her apron-string, and begins rolling it between his fingers; if the fair one interrupts him, and withdraws the apron-string from his hands, it is a bad sign, and the disappointed lover may go and seek elsewhere a less obdurate mistress; if, on the contrary, he is permitted to roll it to the waist, he may regard himself, not as being sure of his conquest, but as certain of being accepted for a partner during the festivities of the day. In fact, a young girl possessing the slightest claims to beauty, and belonging to a respectable family, would not be happy had she not, on her return from the dance, an escort of at least half-a-dozen of these young gallants. This little band of lovers forms

a merry procession ; they are on the very best possible terms both with themselves and each other, and chat and sing gaily together along their homeward road. The maiden's father invariably gives them a most hospitable reception ; he advances in person to the threshold to receive them, and the table is spread to do them honour. The very best fare the house affords is produced for their refreshment—pancakes, fried bacon, and cider, in abundance. Meanwhile, the maiden, under pretence of changing her holiday attire, seeks the opportunity of retiring into an adjoining apartment, whither she is followed by her admirers, to each of whom a short interview is permitted, one after the other, according to the order in which they may have been accepted for the dance. In general, the young girl, during these interviews, shows neither love, nor indeed even a preference for any one among her admirers ; she receives them all with perfect affability, but also with a great degree of reserve. These *têtes-à-têtes* last for a greater or less length of time, according to the number of the *courtiers* ; for, without committing an act of gross rudeness, of which there is scarcely a single example to be met with in the entire province, it is absolutely necessary that, before evening closes, each shall have had his quarter of an hour's interview.

For the rest, these *conduites*, as they are called, seldom lead to anything ; they are regarded in the light of simple civilities, the question of marriage being rarely broached between the parties concerned ; indeed, after several years' assiduities, our lovers do not consider themselves in any-wise more strictly engaged to each other than would a fashionable couple at Almack's, after having danced a set or two of quadrilles together. Very frequently, also, do we see young girls, whose banns have been published, still permitting themselves to be escorted home by their admirers. In this case, the bridegroom elect, should he chance to form one of the band, is neither better nor worse treated than the rest ; and he would be considered as a most ridiculous gallant, and an insupportably jealous lover, did he testify the slightest symptoms of umbrage or discontent at this arrangement.

When, however, the relatives on both sides are agreed, when the marriage is definitely arranged, the *fiancée* makes choice of a bridesmaid from among her relations or intimate friends, and the future husband also on his side chooses

his *garçon d'honneur*. This done, they proceed, for the space of fifteen days, the groomsman and *fiancée* on the one side, and the bridesmaid and bridegroom elect on the other, to invite the wedding guests ; for, under circumstances of such importance, and upon an occasion of such solemnity, none are forgotten, no matter how low in rank or station they may be. There is not, perhaps, another country in the world where family spirit is so thoroughly understood or rigidly kept up as it is in Brittany. Little does the precise degree of consanguinity signify ; in this country one is a relation from tradition. It might be said, indeed, that families in their intermarriages had aimed at maintaining those hospitable and benevolent customs and habits which had formerly united in such strict bonds of unity the members of the ancient tribes.

The Sunday preceding the wedding-day is devoted to the observance of a very singular custom : each of those who have accepted the invitation of the bride and bridegroom send a present to the young couple by their farm-servants, whom they take care to clothe in such a manner as to give a high idea of their own magnificence. These presents are frequently of considerable value, though seldom consisting of any article beyond household utensils, or provisions for the wedding feast.

The wedding almost invariably takes place upon a Tuesday, and, when practicable, in the house of the bride's parents. This condition, indeed, is even necessary for the proper ordering of the festival. At an early hour of the morning the young men collect together at a neighbouring village, where the bridegroom elect has appointed to meet them.

So soon as their number is complete, they arrange their order of march, and, preceded by a band of music, consisting of a *binion*—a species of rude fife—a *bombarde*, and a *tambourine*, set out for the dwelling of the bride. There, all is in the most profound silence ; the courts and house-doors are closed, and although the barn, the farmyard, and every shed and outbuilding of the dwelling sufficiently denote, by the “busy note of preparation,” apparent on all sides, that the festival is anxiously looked for, the little party, consisting of the bridegroom and his friends, is kept for a length of time knocking at the gate ; at last a man, holding a switch of birch-broom in his hand, advances to the threshold of the door and pointing

out the way to the nearest château, addresses the assembly in a very elaborate discourse in rhyme, in which he assures them, that at the dwelling he has indicated they cannot fail of receiving a hearty welcome on account of their beautiful attire.

As this ceremony has been anticipated, the bridegroom has taken care to provide himself with a *rimeur*—in general the village tailor. This individual replies to his rival, verse for verse, compliment for compliment. “This house,” he says, “is precisely the palace we seek. We well know that it contains a flower more brilliant than the sun. Hide her then no longer from our eyes, for it is to seek her that we are come.”

Upon this the first *rimeur* retires into the interior of the house to seek the oldest and ugliest woman he can find, and leading her by the hand to the door, presents her to the assembled visitors.

“Behold,” exclaims he, “the only flower we possess here. You appear to me to be honest men and good Christians, and we are willing to confide the damsel to your protection, if it is for the sake of her beautiful eyes that you have undertaken the journey.”

“Beyond a doubt,” replies the tailor, “this is a most respectable lady; but I should imagine that the time of feasts and merry-makings was passed for her. We do not deny the merits of grey hair, more particularly when those locks have become blanched in honest industry; but at present we require another thing. The maiden whom we seek has not by one-third this lady’s age; she is easily recognised by the brilliant lustre which her matchless beauty sheds around.”

After the old woman has been disposed of, the *rimeur* brings out successively a child in arms, a widow, and a married woman; but his adversary ever finds some excellent reasons for rejecting each fair one without wounding her self-love, until at length the young bride herself appears decked out in full nuptial costume.

Forthwith all enter the house; the *rimeur* places himself upon his knees, and repeats a *pater* for the living and a *de profundis* for the dead. At this moment the scene, so joyous just before, now assumes a more touching character; sometimes even the *rimeur* is interrupted by the tears and sobs of the spectators: so true it is that sadness and solemnity ever lurk at the bottom of the gayest festivals.

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The bridal party now takes the road to the village; but every moment it is arrested in its march by bands of mendicants, who, posted on the banks which on either side border the road, dispute its passage by means of boughs of thorns and brambles, which they wave to and fro in the faces of the bridal *cortège*. It is the duty of the groomsman to cause this importunate barrier to fall, and this he affects by the skilful distribution of sundry small coins. This duty is executed with a good grace, and frequently with generosity. But when the road is long, these toll-bars are so numerous that the functions of the groomsman are far from being agreeable.

After the religious ceremony comes the wedding feast, one of the most extraordinary exhibitions in the world. No description, scarcely, can give the reader an adequate idea of this strange multitude of guests, of all ages and of both sexes, which form a succession of confused and motley groups, seeming to defy as well the pencil of the artist as the pen of the writer.

From an early hour of the morning, the tables have been arranged under tents pitched for the occasion in a neighbouring meadow, and temporary kitchens have also been erected in the open air. All the neighbours, all those among the guests who can boast of some skill in the culinary art, now hasten to offer their advice and assistance. And a goodly sight in truth is it to behold them in this steaming atmosphere, watching over and superintending the huge masses of beef and mutton, and the innumerable turkeys, geese, and fowls, which are slowly turning

or quickly spinning before the roaring fires. Yet, whatever be the zeal of these volunteer cooks, there are very few who do not desert their posts when the discharge of fire-arms, and the far-off and piercing sounds of the *binion* announce the approach of the bridal *cortége*.

The newly-married couple march side by side at the head of the party, preceded by the fiddlers and stick players, who open triumphantly the procession. Next come the parents of the bride and bridegroom; the other guests follow pell-mell as suits their fancy, each in the costume of his canton; some on foot, others on horseback; oftener two individuals may be seen mounted upon the same animal—a man astride upon the stuffed *traversin* which serves as a saddle, with his wife or daughter behind him seated upon a pillion. It is by no means rare either, to see asses charged with panniers, in which are stowed away a bevy of rosy-cheeked little children, whose lively and astonished countenances, just peering over the edge of their wicker conveyance, add still further to the picturesque effect of this rural picture. The beggars close the procession; for they also flock in hundreds to get their share of the remnants of the feast.

After a few moments of confusion, occasioned by the arrival of so many people, the assembled guests sit down to table. The tables, composed of strong deal planks, firmly nailed down to solid posts, driven into the earth, are very low and very narrow. The benches which in lieu of chairs are placed round the festive board, are constructed in the same fashion, and are so much elevated in comparison with the table, that you would have your knees between yourself and your plate, if at a genuine Breton wedding feast you were to make use of this article of luxury. But the arts of refinement have not yet attained to this height in Brittany. The soup is eaten from a porringer, and the more solid articles of food from the hands of the guests. As to the liquids, they are served in huge *pichets* of earthenware, and are drank out of cups, one being set down to every five or six persons. It is even considered a mark of civility for a guest to present to his neighbour the cup out of which he has already drank, in order that he may drain its contents; and a refusal in such a case would cause the individual so honoured to be regarded as a gross-mannered and ill-bred man.

As to the repast itself, it cannot boast of any great variety or delicacy of viands;

it presents an abundance and profusion which recal to mind the celebrated nuptials of Gamache. The young bridegroom and the people of the house circulate incessantly round the tables, anticipating all wants, and pressing each guest to do honour to the repast; indeed, they scarcely take any other share in the feast except the compliments and congratulations they receive, and the cups of strong cider they are compelled to empty, often, it must be said, to the serious detriment of their heads and limbs.

After each service the music strikes up, and every one rises from table; some set-to at games of wrestling and single-stick, others get up a dance; the more officious assist in gathering what remains upon the wooden trenchers, and distributing the fragments to the beggars, stationed in ragged groups in a neighbouring field, like a party of gipsies. After this a second course is served, and the party again seats itself round the hospitable board; this course in like manner disposed of, they return to the ball, then to the table again, and so they continue until the shadows of the coming night warn them to return to their several homes.

The ranks now become thinner and thinner, until at length the groomsman and bridesmaid are the only visitors left of the entire assembly; in fact, it is their duty to retire the last of all. In some parts of Brittany it is the custom for them to watch all night in the bridal chamber, in order that the young couple may be considered worthy of joining, during the following day, in the games and dances of their companions. On these occasions, the watchers must stand side by side at the foot of the bed, a lighted candle in each hand, from which post they cannot stir until the flame shall have reached their fingers. In other localities it is the duty of the groomsman, during the whole of the night, to cast nuts to the bridegroom, who cracks them and hands the kernels to his bride to eat. There are yet many other customs connected with a Breton marriage ceremony, no less strange and extraordinary, but which, however, delicacy enjoins that we should pass over in silence.

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For the rest, all these customs varying so much according to the different localities, and modified also by time, it would be almost impossible to present a general and faithful picture of them to the reader. Thus, for example, at the *Île aux Moines*,

it is the world reversed; there the damsels make the first advances; 'tis they who offer proposals of marriage and declarations of love.

The festivals to which the nuptials give place generally last three days, until the Friday succeeding the wedding. Upon that day the young wife embraces the friends and playmates of her youth, and bids them adieu, as if she were never more to see them again. And, in fact, from her wedding-day, a new life commences for the Breton woman; and a sad and monotonous life from henceforth is it for her, unenlivened by the festival or the ball. For in precise ratio as the unmarried girls of Brittany are free and unrestrained, so are the married women under subjection to, and, indeed, completely the slaves of, their husbands. In certain cantons of the province, and principally in the Léonais, the married woman who would wear the holiday dress or trinkets of a young girl, or be seen dancing at a village festival, would be pointed at by the neighbours, and lose caste in the parish. Her sole employment must be from henceforth the care of her establishment; her sole enjoyment the peace of the domestic hearth.

And yet in the lives of these poor recluses, certain events take place at rare intervals, casting a ray of sunshine athwart this monotonous existence, and arousing a feeling of tender solicitude. This is when they become mothers. Then the farm once more assumes a gay and joyous aspect; the threshold is strewed with freshly-gathered leaves and flowers, and the cheerful notes of the *binion* are once more heard, recalling to the listener's memory all the fondly-cherished dreams of her early years. The baptismal ceremony is a grand festival for the entire household. Upon this auspicious day, the waggons repose under the sheds, and the oxen in their stalls, where they have a double allowance of corn served out to them, in order that they, too, may participate in the rejoicings of the family, whose labours also they share. The functions of the godfather and godmother now come into requisition; functions which it must be said are not a little onerous as well as expensive to the parties concerned. It is their duty to defray all the expenses of the day; usage exacts also that they show themselves generous to the bell-ringers, the priest, and also to the minstrels which form their escort. Even then their duties are not

yet completed; on leaving the church, they are assailed by a crowd of children and beggars—for mendicity is the plague of Brittany—who come to wish all sorts of happiness to the new-born son and heir, and custom decrees that these good wishes be recognised by donations of half-pence and other small coins, which, on being scattered among the suppliants, become, as usual, the prey, not of the most needy, but of the most active and light-fingered.

Meanwhile, at the news of her happy delivery, all the gossips of the village hasten to the dwelling of the mother. They bring with them invariably the best that their houses afford, and even send to the nearest considerable town to seek for presents, "worthy," as they say, in the figurative and poetical language of their country, "of being offered to the mother of the little Christian whom the Almighty has sent from paradise to augment the number of his faithful upon the earth."

The evening is spent in the sick-chamber of the mother. It is absolutely necessary that she eat of all the meats that have been sent to her; that she taste of all the fruits she has been presented with, and that she reply to all the toasts that are drank to her health, as well as to the thousand questions and inquiries with which she is overwhelmed. This is, without doubt, no easy task; a task, moreover, which few women would be able to endure; but a robust constitution in general preserves her from the serious consequences which might accrue from so misplaced a festival; a merry-making which is but too frequently pushed far beyond the limits of strict sobriety.

In a state of civilization so far advanced as our own, the exercises of the body are every day taking a less important position in social life. From day to day, in fact, activity becomes as it were more interior, if not more intellectual. But the Breton peasant is still very far removed from the influence of our more refined habits and customs; he may be likened to the simple and eager child, delighting to play with fatigue, and ever flying to seek emotions, even though they should be in pain. Foot-ball, wrestling, stick-playing, and horse-racing are his most cherished amusements, and these games still preserve in his country all the original impress of their truly primitive character.

In the mountainous districts of Brittany the passion for horses is universal. There, the poor man has his steed as well as the

rich; his horse feeds on the hill-side, sleeps in the open air, drinks at hazard of the stream of the valley; very frequently it has not even a stable. But when the cold nights of winter approach the case is altered: then, the master will share with his faithful companion, not only his daily bread, but also the shelter of his humble dwelling.

The origin of the Breton horse-races is lost in the shadows of the past. There is, indeed, mention made in one of their national poems, of a certain Breton king, who, not knowing out of the many chiefs who sought the hand of his daughter, to whom to give the preference, proposed a horse-race: the prize to be the hand of the beautiful Liénor. Later, under the sway of the Dukes of Brittany, the conqueror's reward consisted of a gold chain, or an ermine mantle. At the present day it is but a simple laurel branch, which they attach with a knot of red ribbon to the head of the successful horse; but the honour of this distinction suffices for the emulation of the hardy Breton. The recompence consists, above all, in the approving smiles of the maidens, in the plaudits of the crowd, and also in the pride of a victory not unfrequently purchased at the risk of considerable personal danger to the individual concerned. In fact, here, the race-course is the very reverse of those beautifully levelled and carefully kept pieces of turf where there is no obstacle to be found to impede the animal's stride. It is absolutely necessary that the reader should have beheld one of these perilous heats to be enabled to form a correct idea of its dangerous nature. The course to be run over is sometimes a hard and flinty road, sometimes a marshy bottom, where, at every stride, the animal sinks above the fetlock, at other times it is a slipping uneven pathway winding amidst rocks or along the brink of precipices; and very frequently all these difficulties, all these perils, are united in one course.

The number of the running horses varies considerably; sometimes there are but two entered; often may be seen twenty, and even more, engaged in one race. The Breton horse, the one at least usually in request for these rustic sports, is of low stature, and very slightly limbed, but the head is lively, the eye sparkling and animated, and the hoof round and well formed; he requires but little nourishment, is hardy to a degree, well inured to toil, and, in the race, his

pluck is indomitable. At a given signal the animals dash off from the starting post, amid the shouts and plaudits of the spectators. Docile to the spur of the jockeys, who grasp firm hold of their long and flowing manes, they fly with the speed of light through ravines, through mountain torrents, and through quagmires; nothing checks them for an instant in their headlong career, nor does any danger appal their adventurous riders, such confidence do they place in the sure-footedness of the animal they bestride—so anxious are they to bear off the palm.

The conqueror is the object of the admiration and felicitations of the enthusiastic crowd. He is surrounded by the multitude, receives the embraces and congratulations of all, and if the victory has been signal, some village Pindar is sure to spring up, who will perpetuate the remembrance of it in his *rimes*, which will, ere long, be on the lips of all the pretty girls of the canton. The laurel branch, that gage of victory, will also be religiously preserved by the conqueror, and, as a holy relic, he will suspend it in his dwelling, where it will hang over the mantel-shelf, in loving company with the saintly palm-branch, and his old and well-tried musket.

The football and wrestling matches take place principally in the flat country, in the dioceses of Léon and Tréguir. The former are sometimes betwixt man and man, sometimes between two communes; in the latter case they are termed *soules*. These *soules* were of very frequent occurrence in former days, but in measure as the local rivalries, formerly maintained in the feudal ages, have become weakened by time, so have the *soules* fallen off in attraction. The numerous accidents of which they were the occasion have also contributed, in a great measure, to their decay. The fact is, that in these *mélees*, in which several hundred persons were engaged, if there were not any dead left on the battle field, there were in general, a considerable number of wounded. Another inconvenience connected with these matches lay in the difficulty experienced in deciding on which side to award the victory. After a hard day's tussle night often came ere the football, the object of contention, had become the undisputed property of either one of the contending parties. This football, however, was a glorious trophy for the victorious commune. In former days it was borne by the conquerors, in solemn pro-

cession, on the Sunday following the engagement; now they content themselves with suspending it to the steeple of the village church, where it hangs for weeks after the battle, in commemoration of the prowess of the inhabitants.

Individual engagements or wrestling matches, are still of very frequent occurrence in Brittany; they are announced for several weeks previously in all the neighbouring communes. At the termination of high-mass, the *maire*, or his coadjutor, standing at the church door, or on some elevated piece of ground near at hand, proclaims, in a loud voice, the important news. The lists are prepared in a field, or in some well beaten yard. A long cord, kept at a proper strain by means of stout posts fixed in the ground at equal distances, marks out the space reserved for the combatants. But this would prove but a feeble barrier against the press of such an immense concourse of persons as are here assembled, were not other and more ingenious means had recourse to, for the purpose of retaining the crowd within proper limits. There is, in Brittany, a class of persons despised by every one, and on that account despising themselves sufficiently to be induced to accept any employment which may hold out to them the slightest hope of emolument—this class is that of the tailors. Not a peasant in Brittany will pronounce their name without adding, by way of qualification, "*saving your respect*," as if some obscene animal were alluded to. They pick out, then, five or six tailors. Armed each with a frying-pan, well-smeared on the bottom with grease, and blackened with soot and smoke, these attendants make, without ceasing, the circuit of the lists, and with this formidable weapon striking the more advanced, without the least regard for their holiday attire, they compel them to give way and retire within the prescribed limits, amid the ironical cheers and laughter of the crowd.

Inside the ring is the post of honour, and there may be discovered, grouped together upon the green sward, a little knot, consisting of the head persons of the commune, and a few old wrestlers, the judges of the field. Frequently, mounted *gensdarme* are posted on the skirts of the

crowd, and aid in maintaining good order, through the respectful fear which every Breton peasant experiences for these much dreaded agents of the law.

The wrestlers now appear in the arena, bare-footed, and clad only in short wide pantaloons, or rather drawers, reaching to the knee, and new shirts, formed, however, of the coarsest materials. On first catching sight of each other the two combatants advance into the middle of the ring, and shake hands in the presence of the bystanders. They mutually swear that they have had recourse neither to sorcery, nor to any arts of divination or witchcraft, and promise to contend together fairly and loyally in the approaching engagement. Then they close, and the struggle begins. And now, on all sides, are heard the shouts and cries of the spectators, who, appealing to each wrestler by name, bid him remember that he has got to sustain the honour of his parish, and the glory and reputation of his native village. The combat is very frequently sustained with vigour for nearly an hour, for, in order that the victory be complete and decisive, it is absolutely essential that one of the combatants shall succeed in throwing his adversary twice upon his back, in such a manner as to make him touch the ground with both shoulders. When the plaudits of the crowd have saluted the conqueror, the latter seizes, by one of his horns, the ram, the prize of his victory, and, preceded by the minstrels, makes three times the circuit of the lists, elevating the animal above his head, in order that it may be seen by all.

There are some wrestling matches occasionally held in which may be counted more than a hundred combatants. Many adopt this rude profession for the sake of gain, but there are several wealthy farmers who enter the arena for the mere sake of the amusement derivable from the combat, and the honours to be procured by victory.

We have briefly glanced at some of the more prominent among the festivals and amusements of the Breton peasantry; in our next paper, we purpose giving some account of a few of the religious ceremonies and strange superstitious peculiar to the province.

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